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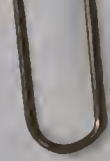
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TOWARDS A CLASSIFICATION OF THE
THEORIES OF HUMAN PLAY

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Towards a Classification of the Theories of Human Play," submitted by George Edward Kingston in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were twofold: (1) to review the literature in the field of human play; and (2) to formulate a tentative classification of the theories of human play in order to move towards further conceptualization of the nature of human play.

The method of research was that of critical analysis based on a survey of the literature of the field of human play and relevant literature from related areas of study. An overview of the literature indicates the need for more conceptualization in the field. The desired cumulative characteristic of science is not demonstrated as most theories are derived from single fields of academic study or clinical practice with the result that the emerging body of knowledge tends to be a fragmented and unrelated collection of theories. Presentations tend to be hypercritical of other theories. Moreover, the theories advanced to date appear to be narrowly conceived and too frequently lack an empirical base.

The definition of play which was developed as one result of the review of literature is as follows: an activity or behavior is adjudged to be ludic in nature to the extent that it is characterized by an orientation towards a pole of behavior which is voluntary, consummatory, and governed by rules of irrelevance and a primacy of assimilation over accommodation.

A review of the extant classification scheme emphasizes certain points which have implications for further developments in the

classification of explanations of the nature of human play:

1. The nature of play itself and the nature of the theories which have been advanced to explain play hampers the development of classification categories which are mutually exclusive.
2. The theories advanced to date vary widely and may be classified on a continuum from being relatively comprehensive, empirically-based, systematic, and integrated to being restrictive, speculative, fragmented and unrelated.
3. The theories, in most instances, are closely allied with and are developed from a consideration of the theories and philosophies which deal with larger areas of knowledge.
4. A relative preponderance of purposive-coping explanations may be noted in the body of play theory.
5. A tentative conclusion which may be drawn from the formulation of the tentative classification scheme is that play may be either coping or expressive behavior or both.
6. When compared with its predecessors, the tentative classification is viewed by the writer as being on a sounder foundation, as being more complete and comprehensive, as featuring a more integrative and interdisciplinary treatment (which more closely approximates the reality factors present in the nature of play), and as emphasizing the importance of understanding the link between explanation and the phenomena explained.

The study was concluded with recommendations for further study which emphasized the need for further conceptualization in the field of play.

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The writer expresses his appreciation to his committee members, Professor A.F. Affleck (Chairman), Dr. C.A.S. Hynam, Dr. R.B. Wilberg, and Professor R.J. Paddick for their guidance and criticism in the preparation of this paper.

In particular, the influence of the writer's committee chairman may be summed up in the following statement by Alfred North Whitehead which is taken from his book, The Aims of Education:

Mankind is as individual in its mode of output as in the substance of its thoughts. ... In every faculty you will find that some of the more brilliant teachers are not among those who publish. Their originality requires for its expression direct intercourse with their pupils in the form of lectures, or of personal discussion. Such men exercise an immense influence; and yet, after the generation of their pupils has passed away, they sleep among the innumerable unthanked benefactors of humanity.

The writer appreciates the confidence and encouragement rendered by his wife, Wendy; and the urgings of his family, Kevin and Erin, to complete the task and once more become a "player".

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A philosophy merely accepted from another man and not thought out for one's self is as dead as a mere catalogue of possible opinions.

--Josiah Royce

I. INTRODUCTION

Exploration of play has been the concern of a number of disciplines--anthropology, social psychology, sociology, physiology, psychology and pedagogy--to name those in which writers have proposed "theories" to explain the nature of human play. In most instances these explanations of play are concerned with a single aspect of a particular discipline or a single characteristic of play.¹ Consequently, the general nature of play as a universal phenomenon with multifarious roots is not given due credit.

Presentations of theories of play such as the ones by Britt and Janus², Sapora and Mitchell³, and Miller and Robinson⁴, all appear to

¹E. S. Robinson, "Play", Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan), vol. XII (1934), pp. 160-161.

²Stuart H. Britt and Sidney Q. Janus, "Toward a Social Psychology of Human Play", The Journal of Social Psychology, 13,(1941), pp. 351-384.

³Allen V. Sapora and Elmer D. Mitchell, The Theory of Play and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1961), pp. 77-111.

⁴Norman P. Miller and Duane M. Robinson, The Leisure Age (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc. 1963), pp. 103-143.

consider the interdisciplinary scope of the nature of play. There is, however, little effort to synthesize the statements into a meaningful whole. The need for a systematic treatment of the concept of play becomes more apparent when one attempts to assimilate approximately one hundred theories of human play.

At this juncture the body of writings on human play appears for the most part to exist as a fragmented collection of explanations that lack a core of integrating concepts which facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to a codification of extant knowledge. The body of play knowledge has evolved in a crinkum-crankum manner with contemporary writers relying heavily on the statements of their forerunners. There is a need for a classification of the explanations so that they may be placed in a perspective which will allow further ordering of knowledge about human play.

Classifications of play theories, like any classifications of human phenomena, are useful as heuristic devices for changing scales of observations, for perceiving hitherto unforeseen relationships, and for recognizing subtleties.

The nature and purpose of the play of children and the recreation of adults is receiving increasing attention. Researchers in various disciplines and professional practitioners in various professions are increasingly concerned about play as it is related to the socialization process, personality development, mental health, creativity, pedagogical practices, therapy, and numerous other processes and problems. In recent

years many advances have been made in the social sciences. It is assumed that it is most timely that yet another effort be made to order knowledge about human play around a viable conceptual framework.

II. THE PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

Briefly stated, the purposes of this study are twofold:

(1) to review the literature in the field of human play; and (2) to formulate a tentative classification of the theories of human play in order to move towards further conceptualization of the nature of human play.

III. DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Throughout the study terms not defined in this section will be employed in the most appropriate sense as defined in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English.⁵

In this study the following definitions will apply:

Play - An activity or behavior is adjudged to be ludic⁶ in

⁵ H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (ed.), The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (Oxford: The University Press, 1958), 4th edition.

⁶ The term ludic will be used to qualify behaviors related to play and will be employed in the sense developed by:

Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955); and

Jean Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962).

nature to the extent that it is characterized by an orientation towards a pole of behavior which is voluntary, consummatory, and governed by rules of irrelevance and a primacy of assimilation over accommodation.⁷

Theory - The term, theory, ideally is employed to represent a comprehensive conceptual scheme which is anchored upon a foundation of empirical evidence.⁸ The "theories" of play established to date fail to meet the criteria of this definition as they lack both the empirical base and the comprehensiveness. They will, however, be accepted in the spirit in which the statements were postulated by the authors, that is, as theories. At this juncture the theories of play are mainly speculative although, increasingly since approximately 1900, theorists have moved towards the incorporation of an empirical base and a systematic approach to theory construction.

IV. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations

As the bulk of the reference material for the study spans ninety years, the failure to attain consistent usage of terminology is a major

⁷ The reader should refer to Chapter Two of the study wherein the above definition of play is developed.

⁸ Deobold B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1966) pp. 62-71, 172; and Elwood C. Davis and Donna M. Miller, The Philosophic Process in Physical Education (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1967) 2nd ed. pp. 179-183.

problem. Terms which receive frequent usage throughout the study, for example; play, recreation, instinct, theory and so forth, have received much attention but have not achieved much consensus as to their precise meaning. New and more specific terms have been developed to partition the dimensions that the original terms occupied.

Related closely to the above limitation is the problem of employment of the term in the manner intended by the author. Moreover, many theories were written prior to the present age of increased sensitivity to semantic difficulties, of increased demand for operationalizing key concepts, and of increased emphasis upon empirically-based theories. Difficulty, therefore, is encountered in preventing too liberal or too narrow an interpretation of the author's use of the terms which frame the principal part of the study.

The author is unable to obtain primary source material for writers such as Lazarus, Colozza, Claparède, and Gutsmuths. Reliance is therefore placed on secondary sources for their contributions.

Related to the above is the problem of including only explanations of play written in the English language. To the author's knowledge this is not a major limitation as it appears that most "theories" have been translated into English; yet, as in any form of translation some subtleties of meaning may have been lost.

Delimitations

The study covers a considerable scope and is necessarily somewhat limited in depth. This type of eclectic or interdisciplinary approach is seen as a requisite to ordering further play conceptualization.

Selected concepts and approaches are gleaned from diverse areas of study and are presented in derived form without fully conveying their original theoretical and empirical contexts. Careful documentation is provided to assist the reader who desires to pursue aspects of the study in further depth.

To expedite a broad coverage of the theories of play, individual explanations of play are presented either individually in summary form or grouped in summary form, depending on their relative importance within the study.

The presentation is not an attempt to establish an empirically-based theory of the nature of human play, although this study is seen as a preparation of the groundwork for such a theory.

V. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The introductory chapter serves to introduce the problem, to state the purposes, limitations, delimitations and organization of the study, and to define and explain significant terms to be employed in the study.

Chapter II provides an overview of the literature in the field of play with the express purpose of conceptualizing various interpretations of the nature of human play. This review purports to provide the bases for the emerging classification of play. An attempt is made to place this study in the perspective of the total body of knowledge on human play.

Existing classifications of play theories are considered in Chapter III with a view towards establishing the need for further development of

such heuristic devices. Chapter IV relates two accepted forms of social science explanations, "causal" and "purposive", and links these with two behavioral components of human behavior, "the expressive component" and "the coping component," as identified by Abraham Maslow. The four key concepts provide the conceptual linkage for the formulation of a tentative classification scheme.

Chapter V presents a summary of the study and indicates recommendations for further development and conceptualization.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The difficulties which surround the investigation into the phenomenon of play are largely due to the vagueness of the terminology and the variety of aspects from which the subject is approached.

--Mary Jane Reaney¹

A survey of the play literature indicates a number of significant themes and trends in the writings concerning human play.

The scope, meaning and use of the concept "play" have changed considerably since its first appearance in the writings of the Greeks. Play, and the later Greek concept, recreation, have been joined by a number of allied terms which serve to partition and to alter the original dimensions of the play concept. Concepts such as sport, games, contests, amusements, athletics and physical education have all developed from a consideration of play. The related concepts of leisure, work, drudgery, and discretionary or spare time also have import for any consideration of the nature of play.

The proliferation of concepts belies the actual level of conceptualization present in the literature. An overview of the writings indicates the need for more rigorous conceptualization in the field of human play. In most of the literature the nature and

¹Mary Jane Reaney, "The Psychology of Organized Group Games", British Journal of Psychology, Monograph Supplement, vol. IV (1916), p. 2.

relationships of the above terms, and the distinctions between them, have not been established. Shivers, in discussing the "Problems of Inadequate Conceptualization,"² states the following:

Although there have been few, indeed too few, recreationists and educational philosophers who hinted at more broadly³ defined terminology, none has really stated what recreation is.

What is play? Attempts at defining the nature of play have traditionally been formulated around five concepts. These concepts include when play occurs (in leisure), why play occurs (prime motive), how play occurs (freedom of choice), what occurs during play (activity), and in

² Jay S. Shivers, Principles and Practices of Recreation Service (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 63-83.

³ Ibid., p. 63. Shivers assumes that recreation and play are synonymous. Throughout his book he employs the term recreation rather than play. The basis for positing play and recreation in this manner is contained on page 85 of his book, Principles and Practices of Recreational Service:

Prior to the early 1930's, there was a preponderance of literature on the meaning, nature, psychology and value of play; today the literature of the field has come to focus on recreation and its exploration. Before 1900 few writers even mentioned the term "recreation" as a subject for discussion; after that time the two terms were treated with recreation in the subordinate position. Today, in many of the books on education and recreation major import is given recreation, its structure, meaning and value; whereas play is included only as a secondary consideration.

Probably, the most valuable suggestion would be to accept or to assume that recreation and play are synonymous. For all practical purposes, when an individual speaks of his play he refers to recreation and when he recreates he does so in the spirit of play. The individual does not give any thought as to whether he plays or recreates; he just exhibits a pattern of behavior. The main consideration is that these symbols are interchangeable and have the same meaning, structure and value.

what context play occurs (virtue).⁴ The questions--when, why, how, and what--are appropriate, but the definitions based upon the questions are fraught with difficulties.

For the most part the definitions of play have been phrased within the limited terms of function or use, with the result that the field has accumulated answers which are singularly restrictive and without value as a guide to classification of activities as play or non-play.⁵ The build-up of narrow explanations graphically illustrates the lack of consensus present among acknowledged leaders in the field of play theory and seriously hampers discourse among the authorities.⁶ Huizinga⁷ points out that "...it would be perfectly possible to accept nearly all the explanations without getting into any real confusion of thought--and without coming much nearer to a real understanding of the play-concept." Singular statements are all only partial solutions and because play is a phenomenon of extreme complexity its complete explanation should hardly be looked for in any single statement.⁸

⁴Ibid., p. 63

⁵Ibid.

⁶Julia Menninger, "A Critical Investigation of Theories of Work and Play" (unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Kansas, 1942), pp. 4-9.

⁷Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955), p. 2.

⁸Edward S. Robinson, "The Compensatory Function of Make-Believe Play", Psychological Review, vol. 27 (1920), p. 429.

Other play theorists have attempted to overcome narrowness and specificity by coining definitions which account for the general nature of play. Many of these general definitions could easily define the essence of a number of aspects of human behavior other than play. Definitions such as "...it is self-active representation of the inner-representation of the inner from inner necessity and impulse."⁹; "...doing that which we want to do"¹⁰; "...activity carried on for its own sake"¹¹; and, "...any non-debilitating consummatory experience"¹², illustrate the amorphous character of the comprehensive definitions. Without becoming embroiled in a prolonged discussion of the problems attendant to both types of definitions, it seems sufficient to say that neither suitably defines the nature of play. This recognition has caused some writers to state that play avoids definition or, more frequently, to simply proceed with a discussion of play without concern for establishing the meaning of play.

In his book, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture,

⁹Friedrich Froebel, The Education of Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887), p. 55.

¹⁰Luther Halsey Gulick, A Philosophy of Play (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 124.

¹¹Weaver W. Pangburn, Adventures in Recreation (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1936), p. 10.

¹²Shivers, op. cit., p. 46.

Huizinga¹³ states the following in a chapter entitled, "The Play-Concept as Expressed in Language."

When speaking of play as something known to all, and when trying to analyze or define the idea expressed in that word, we must always bear in mind that the idea as we know it is defined and perhaps limited by the word we use for it....

We can only start from the play-concept that is common to us, i.e. the one covered, with slight variations, by the words corresponding to the English word "play" in most modern European languages. Such a concept, we felt, seemed to be tolerably well defined in the following terms: play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is "different" from "ordinary life". Thus defined, the concept seemed capable of embracing everything we call "play" in animals, children and grown-ups; games of strength and skill, inventing games, guessing games, games of chance, exhibitions and performances of all kinds. We ventured to call the category "play" one of the most fundamental in life.¹⁴

In developing the remainder of the discussion Huizinga points out the multifarious roots of the play-concept and indicates the domain of the play-concept in selected languages in addition to English. Two main points of direct relevance may be drawn from Huizinga's quotation; one is the definition of the play-concept, and the other is the relationship of play to games, exhibitions and performances.

To overcome the difficulties which both the specific and the general type of definition cannot avoid, a number of writers have established lists of criteria or characteristics which they deem to

¹³Huizinga, op. cit., pp. 28-45.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 28.

represent the essence of play.¹⁵ Huizinga¹⁶ has predicated the most widely quoted list of characteristics and his statement is fairly closely paralleled by statements from other leading play theorists.¹⁷ The lists of characteristics have been posited because:

...play is a function of the living, but is not susceptible of exact definition either logically, biologically, or aesthetically. The play-concept must always remain distinct from all the other forms of thought in which we express the structure of mental and social life. Hence we shall have to confine ourselves to describing the main characteristics of play.¹⁸

What are the characteristics of play? Huizinga's aforementioned definition of play provides a promising starting point for examining the characteristics of play. According to Huizinga, the characteristics of play are the following: first, play is a voluntary or free activity; second, play is not "ordinary" or "real" life; third, play proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space; fourth, play absorbs the player intensely and utterly; fifth, play has rules and proceeds in an orderly manner; sixth, play is an activity connected

¹⁵ Frank A. Beach, "Current Concepts of Play in Animals", The American Naturalist, vol. 79 (Nov.-Dec., 1945), pp. 523-541.

¹⁶ Huizinga, op. cit., pp. 1-27.

¹⁷ Roger Caillois, Man, Play and Games (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), pp. 3-10;

John Cohen, "The Ideas of Work and Play", British Journal of Sociology, vol. 4 (1953); and

Erving Goffman, Encounters (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1961), pp. 20-65.

¹⁸ Huizinga, op. cit., p. 7.

with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it; seventh, play has its aim in itself; eighth, play is accompanied by a feeling of tension and joy; and, ninth, play promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.¹⁹

As one scans through Caillois's list of characteristics which define play, the similarity to Huizinga's list may be noted. Play may be defined as an activity which is essentially:

1. Free: in which playing is not obligatory; if it were, it would at once lose its attractive and joyous quality as diversion.
2. Separate: circumscribed within limits of space and time, defined and fixed in advance;
3. Uncertain: the course of which cannot be determined nor the result attained beforehand, and some latitude for innovations being left to the player's initiative;
4. Unproductive: creating neither goods, nor wealth, nor new elements of any kind; and, except for the exchange of property among the players, ending in a situation identical to that prevailing at the beginning of the game;
5. Governed by rules: under conventions that suspend ordinary laws, and for the moment establish new legislation, which alone counts;
6. Make-believe: accompanied by a special awareness of a second reality or of a free unreality, as against real life.²⁰

Caillois disagrees basically with only two characteristics which Huizinga proposes--the relation between play and the secret or mysterious, and the view that play is action denuded of all material interest. Caillois maintains that play tends to remove the very nature

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 7-13, and 28.

²⁰Caillois, op. cit., pp. 9, 10.

of the mysterious through exposing, publishing and expending the secret or the mysterious.²¹ In reading the two accounts of the relation of play to the mysterious it would appear that the two writers do not really disagree; rather they stress different aspects of the relationship. Play can embrace the idea of creating a secret for the players or of dressing up to create an "as if" situation. Play also may embrace mastery of reality or the mysterious through creation of situations wherein the player re-enacts the unknown or the mysterious.

The disagreement regarding the relationship between play and the secret illustrates the problem of a partial or incomplete explanation wherein most theories of play may be criticized more because of their lack of completeness than their lack of validity.²² There is, however, a more significant problem than the incompleteness of one characteristic of play; it is the incompleteness and inadequacy of explanations of play which involve lists of characteristics. A lengthier, more detailed list of criteria would not solve this inherent weakness. Such lists can be, at best, partial explanations because additions or exceptions to the listed criteria can always be established. Moreover, any form of abstracting is in some sense incomplete for abstracting is a human process whereby the essential

²¹Ibid., p. 4.

²²Harvey C. Lehman, and Paul A. Witty, The Psychology of Play Activities (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1927), p. 7

elements of a phenomena are selectively perceived by the abstractionist.

The second point of disagreement between Huizinga and Caillois may be employed to illustrate this basic inadequacy. Both writers classify play and games together under the heading of play, although they disagree on whether play has material interest. Including play and games together raises important considerations for the definition of play. Does play have its aim or end in itself? In establishing his list of play criteria Huizinga maintains that it is autotelic; that is, play has its purpose in itself. This criterion is not taken into consideration when he states that play in the higher forms, which includes games, ritual, exhibitions and performances, may be viewed "...as a contest for something or as a representation of something."²³ Creating a distinction between the aims of lower and higher forms of play does not solve the issue; rather it serves to point up the inadequacy of such a method of defining play. In establishing that play is an end in itself, Huizinga contrasts play to work and other non-ludic behaviors which involve an aim not contained in the activity as such.²⁴ Does this imply that the player would not be interested in the result of his activity? Is work the polar opposite of play in this regard? These and other questions which could be framed help point up the problem of establishing

²³ Huizinga, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 1-45.

specific criteria of play.*

Piaget states that:

An examination of the main criteria usually adopted to distinguish play from non-ludic activities shows clearly that play is not a behavior per se, or one particular type of activity among others. It is determined by a certain orientation of the behavior, or by a general "pole" of the activity, each particular action being characterized by its greater or less proximity to the pole²⁵ and by the kind of equilibrium between the polarized tendencies.

There is need to view play as one possible aspect of any activity; for example, as imagination in respect to thought. Criteria which are suggested in order to define play in relationship to non-ludic activity or behavior should result, not in making a clear distinction between the two, but rather in stressing the fact that the tonality of an activity is ludic in proportion to the degree to which it involves a particular orientation. That is, to the extent that an activity possesses characteristics that are voluntary, consummatory, and governed by

*Note. Acceptance of this criterion in particular would be of major importance for this study. If play were to be viewed as an activity or a behavior having its aim in itself, then the majority of the theories of play which are founded upon a purposive, functional or motivational viewpoint could not be considered as theories of play. They would of necessity be viewed as theories of some non-ludic activity which is similar to play but which is purposive, functional and motivated by ends outside of its own activity or behavior.

²⁵ Jean Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 147.

"rules of irrelevance",²⁶ that activity would be adjudged to have a ludic orientation. This ludic orientation soars to great heights when it is termed the play-attitude,²⁷ the play-element,²⁸ and especially the spirit of play.²⁹

For the purposes of this study the writer is interested primarily in the childhood activity that is designated as play. This primary focus on the play of children is necessitated because "child-play possesses the play-form in its veriest essence, and most purely,"³⁰ and, if Huizinga's definition of play is accepted as reasonably accurate and complete, then perhaps the nature and development of play can be established most precisely in the play of children. To advance the discussion in determining the nature of play attention will now be directed towards children's play.

²⁶Goffman, op. cit., and;

Gregory Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy," Psychiatric Research Reports 2, American Psychiatric Association, 1955, p. 44. Goffman, further developing Bateson's description, states that rules of irrelevance are rules strictly applied to the duration of play which involve placing "...a 'frame' around a spate of immediate events, determining the type of 'sense' that will be accorded everything within the frame."

²⁷Gulick, op. cit.

²⁸Huizinga, op. cit.

²⁹Joseph Lee, Play in Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929); Robert Lee, Religion and Leisure in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964); and, N.V. Scarfe, "Play is Education", Childhood Education, vol. 39 (November, 1962), p. 117.

³⁰Huizinga, op. cit., p. 17.

When does play begin? A definitive answer to this question would greatly assist in firmly establishing the meaning of play. Jean Piaget's³¹ account builds upon the comprehensive works of Charlotte Buhler³² and Karl Groos,³³ and appears to provide the best explanation for the origin and development of play in children.

In the development of cognitive representation, Piaget indicates that schemas of assimilation of reality to the ego develop. These may gravitate towards the pole of the behaviors defined by "assimilation", or towards the pole defined by "accommodation", or to a position of "dynamic equilibrium" somewhere between the two poles.³⁴ To Piaget, play is essentially assimilation, or the primacy of assimilation over accommodation, whereas imitation occurs with the primacy of accommodation over assimilation. Reference may be made to the table on page twenty

³¹Piaget, op. cit.

³²Charlotte Buhler, The First Year of Life (New York: The John Day Co., 1930).

³³Karl Groos, The Play of Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901).

³⁴Piaget, op. cit.;

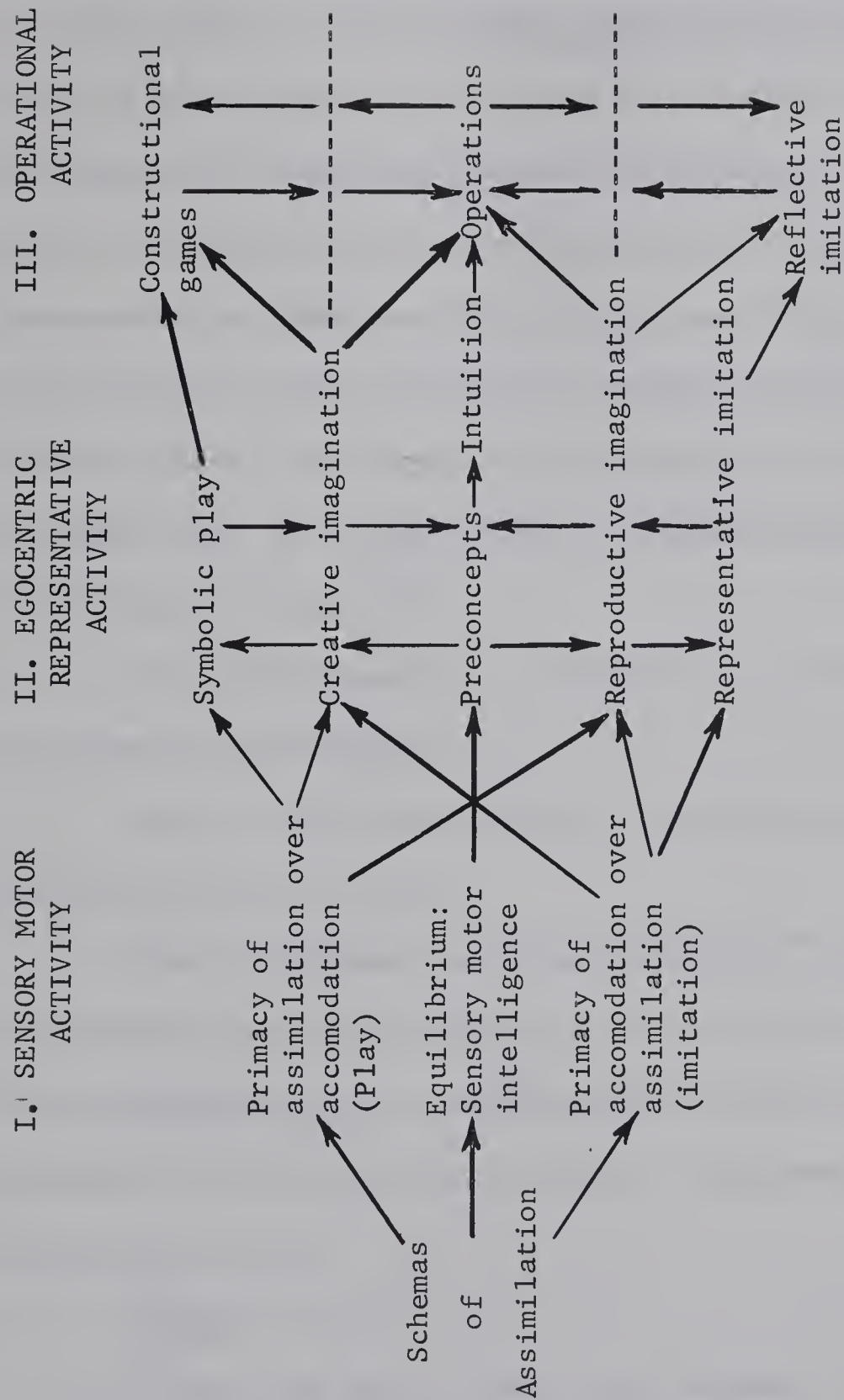
Significant terms in the above statement may be defined as follows:

"schema"--this word is used to indicate an elementary structure, particularly in the beginnings of psychological life.

"assimilation"--the adaptation or incorporation of objects to the child's activity.

"accommodation"--the adaptation or patterning of the child's activity to objects.

"schemas of assimilation"--structures of behavior or activity which adapt or incorporate external elements or objects as a source of representation.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION*

* Jean Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1962), p. I.

wherein the relationship of the above terms may be noted. Piaget develops two main theses in his book Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood: the first is that in the field of play and imitation it is possible to trace the transition from sensory-motor assimilation and accommodation to the mental assimilation and accommodation which characterize the beginnings of representation, [Representation begins when there is simultaneous differentiation and co-ordination between "signifiers" (the collective signs or words) and "signified" (the meaning of the sign or word)]; and secondly, that the various forms of representation (imitation, play, and intelligence) interact.³⁵

In the development of sensory-motor intelligence, Piaget identifies six stages of development:

Stage I--Reflex adaptations; a level of pure reflex exercises such as sucking and crying.

Stage II--Primary circular reactions;³⁶ reflex schemas are broadened by the incorporation of certain external elements, as a result of real experience, into differentiated circular reactions (active repetition of an interesting result). The level involves the first

³⁵ Ibid., p. 2,3.

³⁶ Groos, op. cit., citing J.M. Baldwin. Baldwin gives the name, circular reaction, to the tendency of reaction to renew the stimuli. Perhaps the child first produces them quite accidentally, then repeats his own act, and the sensuous effect of the repetition furnishes the stimulus for renewed effort.

lations and movements of the head and hands accompanied by smiles and pleasure. Primary circular reactions involve only the child's own body.

Stage III--Secondary circular reactions; co-ordination of vision and prehension encourages the child to manipulate objects with increasing deliberation. The action on things, intentional accommodation, may be illustrated by the child swaying hanging objects or shaking new toys.

Stage IV--Co-ordination of secondary schemas; secondary schemas are co-ordinated with each other, resulting in increased mobility, in the constitution of a new system of "indices" which enable the child to assimilate the movements of others to those of his own body, even when his own movements are not visible to him, and in facilitating accommodation to new models through the association of relationships. This stage is a period of investigation through the application of known schemas to new situations.

Stage V--Tertiary circular reactions; experiments are conducted in order to see the result and to discover new properties. Often through chance, the child combines unrelated gestures without really trying to experiment, and subsequently repeats these gestures as a ritual. The combinations at this level are new and developed beyond the limits of adaptation. Ritualization of schemas occur during both Stage IV and Stage V, with the difference arising in the source of the schemas.

Stage VI--Symbolic schemas; schemas become sufficiently independent of immediate perception and experiment to give rise to mental combinations. At this level the ludic symbol is dissociated from ritual and takes the

form of symbolic schemas.³⁷

Both Groos and Buhler establish the origin of play in the initial stage of reflex adaptations. Groos interprets play as the pre-exercise of essential instincts and finds "playful experimentation" (playful exercise) in the first order of impulses, those controlling sensory and motor apparatus.³⁸ Buhler indicates agreement when she states:

...the sucking is the first of the child's movements which is purposeful and complete in bringing about a desired condition. As later, the various other series of movements are practiced as soon as the child has mastered them, are repeated under the name of function pleasure, and as play are displayed at all possible opportunities, so now, this one effective movement--this one movement which the newborn child can accomplish--becomes the chief activity of play.³⁹

A key concept in establishing the origin of play is the concept of "funktionslust" (functional pleasure).⁴⁰ Piaget indicates that behaviors are susceptible of becoming play as soon as they are repeated for mere assimilation, that is, purely for functional pleasure, but he does not agree that functional pleasure occurs in behavior which is purely

³⁷ Piaget, op. cit., pp. 5-104.

³⁸ Groos, op. cit., pp. 6-118.

³⁹ Buhler, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 45, 64, 65, citing Karl Buhler, Die Geistige Entwicklung des Kindes (Jena: Fischer, 1924), 4th Edition, Section 7.

"As functional pleasure Karl Buhler has designated those pleasures which can accompany the organized course of a certain succession of movements, as well while they are being practiced as when they have been mastered."

adaptation, such as is the case of the reflex adaptations of the first stage of development.⁴¹ He views the sucking reflex as a continuation of the pleasure of feeding-time and as a consolidation of the functioning of the hereditary set-up, which is, in effect, real adaption and not, therefore, functional pleasure. In the second stage, however, play seems to assume part of the adaptive behaviors, but it is difficult to establish a boundary between it and them, and consequently it is difficult to say where play begins.

Are "primary circular reactions" generally speaking ludic, adaptive, or both?...In a general way, all adaptation is autotelic, but a distinction must be made between assimilation with actual accommodation and pure assimilation or assimilation which subordinates to itself earlier accommodations and assimilates the real to the activity itself without effort or limitation. Only the latter seems to be characteristic of play; otherwise the attempt to identify play with "pre-exercise" in general would involve the inclusion in it of practically all the child's activity. ...In other words, a schema is never essentially ludic or non-ludic, and its character as play depends on its context and on its actual functioning. But all schemas are capable of giving rise to pure assimilation, whose extreme form is play.⁴²

In summing up the discussion, differentiation between play and adaptive assimilation may be noted during the second stage but there is only a slight differentiation. During the third stage, that of secondary circular reactions, the differentiation between play and intellectual assimilation becomes more pronounced and more advanced. In stage four, Piaget notes that ritualization of schemas occurs, wherein schemas, which

⁴¹Piaget, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 90, 91.

are freed of their adaptive nature, are "played" plastically.⁴³ This ritualization is accentuated during stage five as full preparation for the symbolic play of stage six. A greater variety of combinations parallels a corresponding development toward symbolism. In the sixth stage the ludic symbol is dissociated from ritual and takes the form of symbolic schemas.

The development of symbolic schemas marks the transition from functional assimilation to representational assimilation. This transition denotes a significant change in the classification and evolution of games.⁴⁴ Piaget classifies the games content of play by analyzing "...the 'structure' presented by each game: the degree of mental complexity, from the elementary sensory-motor game to the advanced social game."⁴⁵ Three main types of structure--sensory-motor, representational, and reflective intelligence--are found to be present in games. On this basis Piaget establishes three main types of games: practice games, symbolic games, and games with rules. A fourth type, constructional or creative games, constitutes the transition from all three major game types to adapted behaviors (for example, work).

Practice games involve functional assimilation and are marked by an absence of symbols, make-believe and rules. Practice games involve mainly

⁴³Ibid., pp. 90, 91.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 105-146.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 108.

the sensory-motor schemas of stages two to five of preverbal development. In contrast to practice games, symbolic games imply representational assimilation of an absent object and of the make-believe. Symbolic games begin in the second year of a child's development and continue until they are superseded by games with rules which usually commence at age four and continue until about age twelve.⁴⁶ Games with rules may have sensory-motor combinations or intellectual combinations in which there is competition between individuals and which are regulated, whether by a code handed down from earlier generations or by temporary or spontaneous agreement. In games with rules there is a subtle equilibrium between assimilation to the ego and social life. Such games mark the decline of children's games and the transition to adult play, which ceases to be a vital function of the mind when the individual is socialized.⁴⁷

As a result of the foregoing discussion on the nature and scope of play the following definition will prevail for the purposes of this study: an activity or behavior is adjudged to be ludic in nature to the extent that it is characterized by an orientation towards a pole of behavior which is voluntary, consummatory, and governed by the rules of irrelevance, and a primacy of assimilation over accommodation.

Play theory has undergone and will continue to undergo a progressive

⁴⁶Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1932).

⁴⁷Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood, op. cit., p. 168.

refinement. This is a natural and highly desirable evolution. In many instances, however, this refinement is only a guise for plagiarism, as the literature on human play is riddled with examples in which the source for the refinement has not been acknowledged. The work of Karl Groos has provided a most fertile source for literary piracy, and provides an obvious illustration for the quasi-refinement of a basic work in the field of play.⁴⁸ Refinement in the literature is more apparent than real. One would not be far wrong in stating that very little actual progress has been made in the sixty-odd years since Groos' work first appeared in print.

A critical analysis of the play literature currently available to the reader would indicate extensive repetition and redundancy of viewpoint.⁴⁹ Close scrutiny of the works of Piaget⁵⁰, Huizinga,⁵¹ and Sapora

⁴⁸Groos, op. cit.

⁴⁹For example, the accounts of the following widely used publications will provide ample illustration of this problem. In the case of Miller and Robinson it may be noted that they employ (and acknowledge) complete sections of Sapora and Mitchell's book.

Harold D. Meyer and Charles K. Brightbill, Community Recreation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954);

Allen V. Sapora and Elmer D. Mitchell, The Theory of Play and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press, Co., 1961), Third Edition;

Norman P. Miller and Duane M. Robinson, The Leisure Age (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1966); and,

Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer, Leisure and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press, Co., 1958), Third Edition.

⁵⁰Piaget, op. cit.

⁵¹Huizinga, op. cit.

and Mitchell⁵² reveals a significant debt to the writings of Groos in The Play of Man.⁵³ Of the aforementioned writers only Piaget acknowledges his indebtedness to Groos. An interesting parallel can be established when a comparison is made of Huizinga's and Groos' treatment of the nature of play. Huizinga, in his book, Homo Ludens, does not mention Groos' name anywhere in the text, footnotes or index; an odd occurrence, because the list of characteristics which Huizinga develops is identical to characteristics listed by Groos in his book, published forty-five years previous in the same language, German. Sapora and Mitchell, on the other hand, mention Groos when they discuss his "Instinct-Practice Theory", but they do not credit him as a source for the development of their "Self-Expression Theory of Play".⁵⁴ Sapora and Mitchell state:

The following explanation, The Self-Expression Theory, was first advanced in 1934 by Elmer D. Mitchell and Bernard S. Mason, leaders in sports, recreation and camping, and is here refined and clarified, based upon newer interpretations.⁵⁵

The writings of Groos contain both the term, self-expression, and the basic ideas used in its discussion by the above authors. One can also

⁵²Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit.

⁵³Groos, op. cit.

⁵⁴Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 89-103. It should be noted that Groos attempted to avoid the use of the term, "instinct". He preferred the term, "impulse", and spoke of play being the product of "natural and hereditary impulse". (Karl Groos, The Play of Man, p. 2). Much of the criticism of Groos' theory of "pre-exercise" has centred upon his alleged misuse of the term, "instinct", and is therefore in large measure misdirected.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 89.

find frequent mention of self-expression prior to 1934 in the writings of Gulick⁵⁶ and Claparède.⁵⁷

An examination of the books, The Play of Man,⁵⁸ and The Play of Animals⁵⁹ establishes that a number of other ideas on the nature of play were considered by Karl Groos. A review of these books reveals concepts such as "impulse", "homeostasis", "tension", "joy in being a cause", "self-realization", "experimentation", "Attention", "expression"; concepts which have been employed by recent writers in accounting for the nature of play. As a rule, Groos is mentioned only in connection with his widely-criticized "pre-exercise" theory of play. Unfortunately, this criticism has tended to overshadow the other aspects of his major contribution to the theory of play. In particular, the book, The Play of Man, has served as the foundation for many accounts of human play.⁶⁰ Much of the play

⁵⁶Gulick, op. cit.

⁵⁷E. Claparede, Psychology of the Infant, cited in Piaget, op. cit.

⁵⁸Groos, op. cit.

⁵⁹Karl Groos, The Play of Animals (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1911). It should be noted that The Play of Animals was written in 1896 whereas The Play of Man was not written until late 1898.

⁶⁰Groos, The Play of Man. op. cit. In the Author's Preface, Groos states that "in the discussion of human play...I am supported by valuable philosophical works, among which I acknowledge myself especially indebted to those of Schaller (Schiller), Lazarus, and Colozza." The writer was unable to obtain primary source material on Lazarus and Colozza and is therefore unable to evaluate the originality of Groos' account. Primary source material available for Schiller, however, indicates very little repetition or overlap.

theory written in the form of monographs or articles may also be traced back to reliance on Groos' writings although mention of Groos is made only in connection with the practice theory of play.

In sum, one of this writer's most significant "discoveries" has been the impact of Groos on the whole of play theory, and the quality of his account as compared with the credit which is afforded him.

Generally, an examination of primary source material reveals a similar theme. Extensive statements by the earlier writers on the nature of play have been reduced to "catch" phrases in the current literature and in many instances these phrases are a real discredit to the original accounts. Without exception, the works of early writers disclose a more thorough and general statement than would be the expectation based upon an examination of current comments. A re-examination of primary source material points out the problem of interpretation of the intent and use of various terms. Over the span of sixty years the connotation and dimension of terms have changed. The terms, play and instinct, provide pertinent illustrations of this occurrence. It would appear that many current writers have not sufficiently accounted for this development; perhaps because they have not consulted primary source material and as a result of reliance on the interpretations of intermediary writers, the original accounts have been mistakenly or insufficiently represented.

With the refinement of the literature, new areas of study have

developed. The areas of ontology⁶¹, aetiology⁶², teleology⁶³, and sociology⁶⁴ are being mentioned in the literature with increasing frequency. In addition, considerable interest is directed towards play therapy⁶⁵, the role of play in education⁶⁶ and the relationship of play to aesthetics⁶⁷, contemplation⁶⁸, creativity⁶⁹ and cognitive style and

⁶¹Eugen Fink, "The Ontology of Play", Philosophy Today, vol. 4 (1960), pp. 95-110.

⁶²A. Giddens, "Notes on the Concepts of Play and Leisure", Sociological Review (British), vol. 12 (1964), pp. 73-89.

⁶³Margaret Lowenfeld, Play In Childhood (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1935).

⁶⁴Nelson Foote, "Comments on 'The Consumer in the New Suburbia', by William H. Whyte, Jr.," in Lincoln Clark (ed.), Consumer Behavior (New York: New York University Press, 1954), vol. 1, p. 114; and Gregory P. Stone, "American Sports: Play and Display", Chicago Review, vol. 9 (1955), pp. 83-100.

⁶⁵Emery I. Gondor, Art and Play Therapy (Garden City, N.Y.: Double-Day and Co., Inc., 1954); and

Clark E. Moustakas, Children in Play Therapy (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953).

⁶⁶Joseph Lee, op. cit.; and Scarfe, op. cit.

⁶⁷J.S. Slotkin, Social Anthropology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), pp. 270-283.

⁶⁸Regis Jolivet, "Work, Play, Contemplation", Philosophy Today, vol. 5 (1961), pp. 114-120.

⁶⁹Harold H. Anderson, ed., Creativity and Its Cultivation (New York: Harper and Row, 1957); and

Phyllis Greenacre, "Play in Relation to Creative Imagination", The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, vol. 14 (1959), pp. 61-80.

ability⁷⁰. Diversification into new areas of interest accentuates the need for common agreement upon a core of play theory.

An overview of the literature indicates the need for more conceptualization in the field of human play. The desired cumulative characteristic of science is not demonstrated as most theories are derived from single fields of academic study or clinical practice with the result that the emerging body of knowledge tends to be a fragmented and unrelated collection of theories. Moreover, the theories advanced to date appear to be narrowly conceived, hypercritical of other theories and too frequently lack an empirical base. Such accounts must be superseded by accounts which stress a unified, interdisciplinary, and empirically-based point of view.

⁷⁰ Nina J. Lieberman, "A Developmental Analysis of Playfulness as a Clue to Cognitive Style", Journal of Creative Behavior, vol. 1: no. 4, (Fall, 1967), pp. 391-397; and,

James D. Wang, "The Relationship Between Children's Play Interests and Their Mental Ability", The Journal of Genetic Psychology, vol. 93 (1958), pp. 119-131.

CHAPTER III

ILLUSTRATIVE CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES

OF THE THEORIES OF PLAY

Many explanations have been developed in an attempt to account for the meaning, purpose and causes of play. These expositions have evolved through a reflection upon the play of animals, the play of children, and the play (recreation) of adults. Questions such as: Why does man play?, What causes man to play?, What is the purpose of man's play?, and What is the meaning of man's play? have guided attempts at greater understanding.

Explanations of these questions have been developed from every discipline and interest sphere, but writers marshalling the field of play "must stop acting as though nature were organized in the same way universities are."¹ Most classification schemes for the theories of play do not escape the shortcomings which have been illustrated in the previous section of this paper.

Every classification scheme, with only a single exception², has followed the format which Karl Groos established in his book, The Play of Man³. Groos viewed the conception of play from the

¹Russel L. Ackoff, "Systems, Organizations and Interdisciplinary Research", General Systems, vol. 5 (1960), p. 6.

²Jay S. Shivers, "An Analysis of Theories of Recreation" (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1958).

³Karl Groos, The Play of Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901).

standpoints of physiology, biology, psychology, aesthetics, sociology, and pedagogy. Under each heading he discussed the theories of play which had been elaborated prior to 1898. The writers of the present-day have continued to organize and classify the theoretical explanations of play according to their orientation towards a particular discipline. An analysis of the classification schemes presented in the major textbooks and articles on play (and recreation) shows a wide variety of categories and scope.

Neumeyer and Neumeyer employ only three categories in analyzing the content of play theories⁴. They establish a biological-physiological category, a psychological category, and a catch-all category of "sociological interpretations and aspects".

A more elaborate classification scheme is presented by Miller and Robinson⁵. They create three super-categories; "Nineteenth-Century Play Theories", "Early Twentieth-Century Theories", and "Modern Theories of Play". Within the boundaries of the first two super-categories the authors elucidate the various individual theories that were presented prior to the twentieth-century, and during the twentieth-century (until approximately 1925), respectively. No attempt is made in these super-categories to classify the content of

⁴Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer, Leisure and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958), Third Edition, Chapter 8.

⁵Norman P. Miller and Duane M. Robinson, The Leisure Age (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1963), Chapter 4.

the individual theories. In the third category, however, the authors analyze the theories and classify them according to their physiological, psychological, sociological-anthropological, and aesthetic subject matter.

The most complete compilation of the theoretical explanations of play is advanced by Sapora and Mitchell⁶. After considering the five traditional theories of play which they feel merit review (the surplus energy theory, the recreation theory, the instinct-practice theory, the recapitulation theory, and the catharsis theory) the authors proceed to a full discussion of the self-expression theory of play. While Sapora and Mitchell do not proffer a classification scheme as such, they do organize the last section of their compilation in a manner which suggests a discipline-oriented classification scheme. The headings--"Psychoanalytic Approach", "Genetic Approach", "Play as Part of the Learning Process", "Biosocial Approaches"--accentuate new topics which have not been treated within the aforementioned classification schemes*.

Meyer and Brightbill do not tender a classification scheme in

⁶ Allen V. Sapora and Elmer D. Mitchell, The Theory of Play and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press, Co., 1961), Third Edition, Ch. 4.

* It should be noted that "Play as Part of the Learning Process" has obviously not been ignored in the previous classification schemes.

giving coverage to the theoretical explanations of play⁷. Instead they consider the essences of eight widely-known theories: surplus-energy, preparation for life, recapitulation, instinct, relaxation, recreation, catharsis and self-expression. This approach is echoed by Butler in his book, Introduction to Community Recreation⁸.

A different approach to the formulation of the play theories is presented by Shivers⁹. In answering the question, "Why do people play?", Shivers presents three categories of motivational theories: "Instinct as Motivation", "Hedonism as Motivation", and "Homeostasis as Motivation". This scheme is the only one which does not use the disciplines as guidelines for setting up the categories.

Britt and Janus classify the theories "...according to the elements or aspects of play emphasized"¹⁰ As a result they designate their categories as biological, psycho-biological, psychological, sociological, and clinical. The common pattern for most of the articles which discuss play theory involves a cursory description of

⁷ Harold D. Meyer and Charles K. Brightbill, Community Recreation (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), Third Edition, pp. 28-31.

⁸ George D. Butler, Introduction to Community Recreation (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), Fourth Edition, pp. 4-6.

⁹ Jay S. Shivers, Principles and Practices of Recreational Service (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 46-62.

¹⁰ Stuart H. Britt and Sidney Q. Janus, "Towards a Social Psychology of Human Play", The Journal of Social Psychology, vol. 13 (1941), pp. 351-384.

the common theories of play followed by a detailed discussion designed to set the stage for consideration of the author's preferred theory(ies) of play, which usually fall within a particular discipline. Alexander¹¹, Phillips¹², and Walder¹³ adhere to this procedure in channeling their discussions towards psychoanalytic explanations; Giddens¹⁴ and Reaney¹⁵ follow suit in discussing the sociological and psychological explanations, respectively.

The problematical themes present in the literature discussing the nature of play are also evident in the formulations of the meaning, purpose(s) and cause(s) of play. That is, the schemes themselves and the accompanying discussion tend to be fragmented, irregular, repetitious and discipline-oriented, and give the appearance of being a collection of theories rather than a classification of same.

Most of the writers champion one particular theory, which usually falls within the boundary of a particular discipline, and consequently the classification schemes do not serve as an open forum for the examination of the various explanations. An analysis of the illustrative

¹¹Franz Alexander, "A Contribution to the Theory of Play", The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 27 (1958), pp. 175-193.

¹²Richard H. Phillips, "The Nature and Function of Children's Formal Games", The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 29(1960), pp. 200-207.

¹³Robert Walder, "The Psychoanalytic Theory of Play", The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 2 (1933), pp. 208-224.

¹⁴A. Giddens, "Notes on the Concepts of Play and Leisure", Sociological Review (British), vol. 12 (1964), pp. 73-89.

¹⁵Mary Jane Reaney, "The Psychology of Organized Group Games", British Journal of Psychology, Monograph Supplement, vol. 4(1916), pp. 1-76.

classification schemes which are modelled on Groos' pattern indicates varying degrees of coverage and completeness. Whereas Sapora and Mitchell¹⁶, and Groos¹⁷ include many of the available explanations relative to most schemes: Butler¹⁸, and Reaney¹⁹ cover only a very few accounts. It should be noted, however, that not one of the classification schemes comes close to including all the available theories of human play. Usually only a very cursory description and discussion is developed for each explanation. The purposes of the author largely determine the direction of each account, and its relative coverage and completeness.

Although the classification schemes are conceptualized on the basis of content within specific disciplines, they are organized in an irregular manner. Not all of the disciplines are represented in each of the existing classification schemes; as a result schemes may consist of from two to six categories. Furthermore, a system such as Miller and Robinson's²⁰ or Britt and Janus'²¹ includes

¹⁶Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit.

¹⁷Groos, op. cit.

¹⁸Butler, op. cit.

¹⁹Reaney, op. cit.

²⁰Miller and Robinson, op. cit.

²¹Britt and Janus, op. cit.

categories which are not strictly disciplines. By including dissimilar groupings the writers are not meeting the demands of a classification scheme, which requires a systematic arrangement in categories structured according to established criteria, in this instance, disciplines. Such schemes might be better termed collections rather than classification schemes.

Depending upon the interpretation placed upon a particular theory it may be categorized in a number of ways. Groos²², for example, classifies his pre-exercise theory from the physiological standpoint; Reaney²³ categorized the theory as a biological one; and Neumeyer and Neumeyer²⁴ classify Groos' theory as a biological and physiological theory. Similarly, instinct-based theories of play are classified as psychological by Neumeyer and Neumeyer²⁵ and biological by Groos²⁶.

Related to the above concern is the problem "...that it is seldom possible to classify any one theory under a given category for

²²Groos, op. cit.

²³Reaney, op. cit.

²⁴Neumeyer and Neumeyer, op. cit.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Groos, op. cit.

a systematic theory usually stresses several elements,"²⁷ . An illustration of this is Groos' practice theory, wherein play "...is, in short, preparatory for the tasks of life..."²⁸ and "...the agency employed to develop crude powers and prepare them for life's uses..."²⁹ . Although most writers classify Groos' theory as either physiological or biological, Groos himself posits his ideas throughout his account of the physiological, biological, psychological, aesthetic, sociological and pedagogical standpoints of play³⁰ .

A second situation illustrating the problem of classification arises when the same conception has been proposed by a number of writers, each developing the theory along the avenue of his particular discipline, with no opportunity to reveal a unified and comprehensive

²⁷ Neumeyer and Neumeyer, op. cit., p. 229. The authors preface the above statement with a discussion of the nature of play theories. They conclude that while early views of play--prior to the theories of Schiller, Spencer, Lazarus, Hall, Groos, James (that is, prior to the 1870's)--were not systematic, the accounts of play since the time of these cited writers have been systematic and comprehensive. The authors do not offer a description of their use of the terms, systematic and comprehensive, but this writer is of the opinion that play theories are not systematic and comprehensive because these terms imply an organized whole. To date, all the theories are open to criticism, and have been criticized because they lack completeness and the qualities of a system (that is, wholeness). It might be noted that at the conclusion of their presentation the authors criticize the single-factor theories for failing to account for the comprehensive understanding needed. These are the same theories which they established as systematic and comprehensive.

²⁸ Groos, op. cit., p. 361.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 375.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 361-406.

theory. For example, the concept of "mastery" has been proposed and phrased in the following terms: "mastery of anxiety"³¹, "mastery of oneself"³², "ego mastery"³³, "instinct of mastery"³⁴, "situation mastery" (repetition compulsion)³⁵, "mastery over environment and mastery of painful experience"³⁶, "will to power"³⁷, "motor and psychic mastery"³⁸, and "problem-solving mastery"³⁹. To date the mastery concept has not been classified in any of the exemplary classification schemes. If it were, however, it would provide another example of the inability of this type of classification scheme to

³¹Phillips, op cit.

³²Simon Wenkart, "The Meaning of Sports for Contemporary Man", Journal of Existential Psychiatry, vol. 3: 12 (Spring, 1963), pp. 397-404.

³³Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1950), p. 186.

³⁴Walder, op. cit., p. 222.

³⁵Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (London: The Hogarth Press, 1920), pp. 8-11.

³⁶Ernst Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (New York: International Universities Press, 1952), pp. 32, 182, 183.

³⁷Franklin Parker, "Sport, Play and Physical Education in Cultural Perspective", Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, April, 1965, pp. 29, 30, 80.

³⁸Carl Adatto, "On Play and the Psychopathology of Golf", American Psychoanalytic Association Journal, vol. 12 (1964), pp. 826-841.

³⁹Lawrence K. Frank, "Play in Personality Development", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, vol. 25 (1955), pp. 576-590.

successfully cope with interdisciplinary theories of play. When such a concept is categorized in the appropriate disciplines the opportunity for unity and integration is lost. With this lost opportunity goes the possibility of advancing play theory beyond the fragmented, unrelated, singular and narrow state in which it currently exists.

As mentioned previously Shivers presents a classification scheme which does not employ the disciplines as guidelines for categorizing the theories. He introduces his discussion by posing the questions, "Why do people play?" and "Do people have to be motivated for recreation?"⁴⁰. These questions introduce the classification scheme in which he groups selected theories of play according to three categories of motivation present in the theories: instinct, hedonism and homeostasis. Although his classification system is not as exhaustive as is desirable it is a promising step in the direction of an interdisciplinary classification scheme. By categorizing according to the type of motivation present in the selected theories, Shivers becomes disentangled from the shackles of the discipline-type criteria and is free to join the physical, physiological and biological with the psychological and sociological in treating each type of motivation.

Two significant limitations are present in Shivers' work,

⁴⁰ Shivers, Principles and Practices of Recreational Service, op. cit., p. 46.

the resolution of which would enhance the development of a suitable classification scheme. His formulation is incomplete; moreover, coverage is given only to a sampling of theories, the shortcomings of which are pointed out by Shivers prior to the exposition of his own theory of play⁴¹. The second limitation, that the scheme is based upon the criterion of motivation, which lacks the nature and scope to involve all the theories of play, is of more consequence.

In his book, Principles and Practices of Recreational Service, Shivers does not define or in any manner indicate his meaning of "motivation". However, in another account, he defines motivation "...as a directive process of a variable nature which is the primary cause of human behavior"⁴². Critical analysis of his definition would bear out Maslow's statement that "...no good behavioral definition of motivation has yet been found"⁴³. The problem in using motivation as the criteria for categorizing is not so much in the definition as it is in the nature and scope of the concept.

Allport indicates that "...motives are always a kind of striving for some form of completion; they are unresolved tension, and

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 46-90.

⁴²Shivers, "An Analysis of Theories of Recreation", op. cit., p. 108.

⁴³Abraham Maslow, "Deficiency Motivation and Growth Motivation", in Richard C. Teevan, and Robert C. Birney (Eds.), Theories of Motivation in Personality and Social Psychology (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 115.

demand a 'closure' to activity under way"⁴⁴. Furthermore, motivation implies a desire or want or yearning or wish or lack.⁴⁵ An examination of all the available play theories indicates that a large number of explanations are not based upon goal-seeking behavior, and are therefore impossible to classify within the nature and scope of the criteria of motivation. Kaplan summarizes the problems of and objections to the motivational explanations which are directly relevant to Shivers' classification, when he states:

From a methodological point of view, the objection to motivational explanations is not that they are intrinsically unscientific but that they are so often overextended and misapplied. The purposes at work may call for functional rather than motivational explanations ...There is nothing "pseudo" about such explanations; they are just manifestly false, overlooking the enormous role of unanticipated and even unintended consequences of most actions, to say nothing of natural processes apart from our actions altogether⁴⁶.

In sum, Shivers has advanced a new and meritorious method of classifying the theories of play, but his system is viewed to be inadequate on two main counts; firstly, it is incomplete as it considers only a small number of the available theories of play, and secondly, it is based upon the criterion of motivation, which lacks the nature and scope to involve all the theories of play.

⁴⁴Gordon W. Allport, "The Functional Autonomy of Motives", in Richard C. Teevan and Robert C. Birney (Eds.), Theories of Motivation in Personality and Social Psychology (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 76.

⁴⁵Maslow, op. cit.

⁴⁶Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 364.

CHAPTER IV

A TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF THE THEORIES OF PLAY

I. CONCEPTS INFLUENCING THE CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

An examination of the extant classifications of the theories of play points to the need for developing a more suitable classification system. Within the confines of this section of the paper the task is one of making progress towards establishing such a system.

The following theories, or more appropriately, explanations, of play appear to fall into recognizeable categories. Motivational explanations are present in the writings of Shivers, although not to the extent that he describes in his classification system¹. Two other related forms of explanation, functional and purposive, permeate the play theories which have been posited by theorists from biology², psychology³, and related areas of study⁴. Causal or structural

¹Jay S. Shivers, Principles and Practices of Recreational Service (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967); and, Jay S. Shivers, "An Analysis of Theories of Recreation", (unpublished Doctoral Thesis, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1958).

²For example, Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Psychology (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1910), vol. II.

³For example, G.T.W. Patrick, The Psychology of Relaxation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916).

⁴For example, A. Giddens, "Notes on the Concepts of Play and Leisure", Sociological Review (British), vol. 12 (1964), citing M. Lazarus, Über die Reize des Spiels, Berlin, 1883.

explanations are to be found in the works of Piaget⁵ and Buytendijk⁶.

The fifth type, descriptive explanation, often passes as a theoretical analysis of play, but in reality it is mere description of play and as such does not qualify as an attempt to categorize the theories of play.

Behavioral science is concerned with what people do and why. Specific to this paper are the "what" and "why" of human play. The "what" is subject to two very different kinds of specification:

We may talk about it as a set of acts--bio-physical operations, movements or events; or we may talk about it as a set of actions--the acts in the perspectives of the actors, expressing certain attitudes and expectations, and thereby having a certain social and psychological significance⁷.

In terms of such perspectives it is possible to discuss the meaning of an act and the meaning of an action. Act meaning is what the act "...signifies to the actor or to those with whom he is interacting;..."⁸; whereas action meaning "...is that provided by the perspectives of a particular theory or explanation of the action"⁹.

⁵ Jean Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1962).

⁶ F.J.J. Buytendijk, Wesen und Sinn des Spiels (Berlin: K. Wolff, 1934), in Piaget, Ibid., pp. 158-161.

⁷ Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 358.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 359.

The assignment of meaning of either kind, whether to an act or to an action, is often said to be an "explanation", but the difference is preserved by recognizing that the first is a semantic explanation, the second a scientific explanation¹⁰.

Before proceeding to an exposition of the various types of explanation it is necessary to briefly consider the relationship of interpretation to explanation. Explanations in behavioral science characteristically make use of interpretations wherein both the assignment of an act meaning and an action meaning occurs. In purposive explanations "...acts are given (or found to have) a meaning, and this meaning then enters as an essential constituent of the explanations offered for the resultant actions¹¹. Kaplan considers all act meaning to be purposive because when an act is given a meaning it is interpreted as an action directed towards some end¹². Furthermore, "acts that are not in some sense goal directed are precisely those, it seems to me, that are designated as meaningless"¹³. This is an interesting condition which will be considered more fully later on in connection with Maslow's work¹⁴.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 363.

¹²Ibid. This also applies to acts wherein the end is realized in the action itself. The illustration Kaplan provides is an act which is interpreted as being playful. On the other hand this purposiveness is not necessarily true of all action meaning. Certain theologies and metaphysics, for which the course of events is the fulfillment of God's purposes, or the self-realization of the Absolute, provide examples.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954).

Motivational explanations and functional explanations are regarded by Kaplan as special categories of purposive explanations.

He states that:

A purposive explanation, if it makes reference to goals that the actor in some sense thinks of beforehand, may be called motivational explanation, and otherwise a functional explanation¹⁵.

Two points which are directly pertinent to developing the present discussion may be gleaned from the following statement by Hempel and Oppenheim:

The explanation of an action in terms of the motives of the agent is sometimes considered as a special kind of teleological explanation. As was pointed out above, motivational explanation, if adequately formulated, conforms to the conditions for causal explanation, so that the term "teleological" is a misnomer if it is meant to imply either a non-causal character of the explanation or a peculiar determination of the present by the future. If this is borne in mind, however, the term "teleological" may be viewed, in this context, as referring to causal explanations in which some of the antecedent conditions are motives of the agent whose actions are to be explained¹⁶.

General agreement prevails in considering motivational explanation as a type of purposive or teleological explanation, but the question of the relationship of purposive explanations and causal explanations does

¹⁵Kaplan, op. cit., p. 364.

¹⁶Carl G. Hempel and Paul Oppenheim, "The Logic of Explanation", in Herbert Feigl and May Brodbeck (Eds.), Readings in the Philosophy of Science (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), p. 328.

The term, teleological, will be employed herein in the sense as outlined in the above quotation; that is, the concepts of purpose and teleology will be interpreted without metaphysical connotations of supreme, foreordained or final purpose.

not find such unanimity in the literature¹⁷. Basically the two types of explanation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, nor do they necessarily conflict, but may be viewed as supplementary to one another¹⁸.

Explanations that do not make reference to purposes may be called structural explanations or causal explanations¹⁹. Such explanations are based upon causal laws which assert "...that any event of a specified kind, i.e. any event having specified characteristics, is accompanied by another event which in turn has certain specified characteristics;..."²⁰. As was pointed out previously, teleological explanation, if adequately formulated, can conform to the conditions which causal law demands. In sum, both causal explanations and purposive explanations are capable of performing both of the functions

¹⁷ Herbert Feigl and May Brodbeck (Eds.), Readings in the Philosophy of Science (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953.) Particular reference to this issue is made in the following readings in the book:

Carl G. Hempel and Paul Oppenheim, "The Logic of Explanation", pp. 319-352;

Bertrand Russell, "On the Notion of Cause, with Application to the Free-Will Problem", pp. 387-407;

Herbert Feigl, "Notes on Causality", pp. 408-418;

Moritz Schlick, "Philosophy of Organic Life", pp. 523-536;

Ernest Nagel, "Teleological Explanation and Teleological Systems", pp. 537-558;

Adolf Grunbaum, "Causality and the Science of Human Behavior", pp. 766-778.

¹⁸ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "The Concept of Function", in Edgar F. Borgatta and Henry J. Meyer (Eds.), Sociological Theory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 263-269.

¹⁹ Kaplan, op. cit., p. 365.

²⁰ Hempel and Oppenheim, op. cit., p. 326.

characteristic of scientific explanations, that is, "...of enabling us to appreciate connections and to predict the future"²¹.

Abraham Maslow²² creates a behavior dichotomy which parallels the causal-purposive division of explanation which has been established to date in this section of the paper. He views human behavior as having an expressive component and a coping component.

Coping behavior always has among its determinants drives, needs, goals, purposes, functions or aims. It comes into existence to get something done....The term coping itself implies the attempt to solve a problem or at least to deal with it. It therefore implies a reference to something beyond itself; it is not self-contained. This reference may be either to immediate or to basic needs, to means as well as ends, to frustration-induced behavior as well as to goal seeking behavior²³.

Expressive behavior of the type so far discussed by psychologists is generally unmotivated, although, of course, it is determined. (That is, though expressive behavior has many determinants, need gratification need not be one of them.) It simply mirrors, reflects, signifies or expresses some state of the organism. Indeed, it most often is part of that state, e.g., the²⁴ stupidity of the moron,...the beauty of the beautiful woman...

To further establish the distinction between the coping component and the expressive component of behavior the following list of differences may be employed.

1. Coping is by definition purposive and motivated; expression

²¹Kaplan, op. cit., p. 367.

²²Maslow, op. cit.

²³Ibid., pp. 180, 181.

²⁴Ibid., p. 181.

is often unmotivated.

2. Coping is more determined by environmental and cultural variables; expression is largely determined by the state of the organism. A corollary is the much higher correlation of expression with deep-lying character structure.
3. Coping is most often learned; expression most often unlearned.
4. Coping is more easily controlled (repressed, suppressed, inhibited, acculturated); expression is most often uncontrolled and even uncontrollable.
5. Coping is usually designed to cause changes in the environment and often does; expression is not designed to do anything. If it causes environmental changes it does so unwittingly.
6. Coping is characteristically means behavior, the end being need gratification or threat reduction. Expression is often an end in itself.
7. Typically, the coping component is conscious (although it may become unconscious); expression is more often not conscious.
8. Coping is effortful; expression is effortless in most instances²⁵.

The scheme which the writer will employ to categorize and organize the extant theories of play will be based upon the nature of the explanation present within the individual theory of play. The category embodying the causal explanations will be based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the expressive component of behavior and the characteristics of causal explanations. Purposive explanations, on the other hand, will comprise a category which will be based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the coping component of behavior and the purposive nature of purposive (functional and motivational) explanations. The categories within the classification scheme are not mutually exclusive; nor can they be because of the nature of play

²⁵Ibid., p. 180.

itself and the theory concepts concerning play. The grouping of theories is seen as a basis for the developing areas of the aetiology and teleology of human play^{*}.

Individual theories will be grouped according to the predominant orientation of the theory. They will be presented in summary form with no attempt at critical analysis, although it is fully recognized that considerable criticism can, and has been levelled at the majority of the theories. Instances of comprehensive theories will be classified in both categories if the contents warrant such duplication. Sub-categories within the two major categories will not be presented because sufficient natural divisions are not clearly apparent.

^{*}Aetiology may be defined as an area of study dealing with the cause(s) of human play; and, teleology, as an area of study dealing with the purpose(s) and function(s) of human play. It follows from the contents of this paper, however, that these developing areas are not mutually exclusive.

II. CAUSAL EXPLANATIONS OF HUMAN PLAY

The category embodying the causal explanations of play is based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the expressive component of behavior and the non-purposive characteristics of causal explanation. The theories which follow are viewed as containing causal explanations of human play.

The most influential early theory of play was the "pre-exercise" (preparatory, practice) theory, formulated by Karl Groos. Three distinct aspects comprise Groos' doctrine: a general theory of play as pre-exercise, and special theories of symbolic imagination and catharsis. Elements of both the causal and purposive explanations are present in his theory. Groos saw in play a phenomenon of growth; growth of thought and activity, which found its explanation in the concept of psychophysiological maturation. He conceived play to be the product of a natural or hereditary impulse, or for lack of a better term, "instinct",^{*} to seek action and experience. Groos states that:

...my own view is that there is no general impulse to play, but various instincts are called upon when there is no occasion for their serious exercise, merely for the purposes of practice, and more especially preparatory practice, and these instincts thus become special plays. It seems to me unnecessary to suppose a particular play instinct in addition to all the others, and the fact that selection favours a long period of youth bears this out. When that is assured, and special physiological provision is made

^{*}It should be noted that most writers do not consider the term, "instinct" to be useful in the description of human behavior.

to secure it, then the merely ordinary instincts and impulses are quite sufficient to account for the phenomena of play²⁶.

The basic description of the theory emphasizes the teleological significance of play but analysis indicates aspects which meet the requirements of causal explanation. In Groos' theory play is dependent upon hereditary capability and it first becomes prominent in a motor form--namely, in the active production of effects²⁷. When Groos' theory is freed from its finalism and preparatory purposiveness the idea of pre-exercise becomes that of functional assimilation²⁸.

A second theory, "recapitulation", was advanced by Hall and may be categorized as a causal explanation. Hall asserts that:

I regard play as the motor habits or spirit of the past of the race persisting in the present, as rudimentary functions sometimes of and always akin to rudimentary organs. The best index and guide to the stated activities of adults in past ages is found in the instinctive, untaught and non-imitative plays of children, which are the most spontaneous and exact expression of their motor needs. The young grow up into the same forms of motor activity as did generations that have long preceded them, only to a limited extent; and if the form of every human occupation were to change today, play would be unaffected save in some of its superficial imitative forms. It would develop the motor capacities, impulses, and fundamental forms of our past heritage, and the transformation of these into later acquired adult forms is progressively later. In play every mood and movement is instinct with heredity. Thus we rehearse the activities of our ancestors, back we know not how far, and repeat their life work in summative and adumbrated ways. It is reminiscent, albeit unconsciously of our line of descent; and each is the key to the other. The psycho-motive impulses that prompt it are the forms in which our

²⁶Karl Groos, The Play of Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901), pp. 377-378.

²⁷Ibid., p. 378. Groos employs attention (an impulse that urges to activity so long as it is not hampered by fatigue) and more specifically "the joy in being a cause" as the key items present in the production of effects. He thus anticipates the consummation, absorption and tension which later authors discuss in their analyses of play.

²⁸Piaget, op. cit., p. 153.

forbears have transmitted to us their habitual activities. Thus stage by stage we re-enact their lives once; in the phylon many of these activities were elaborated in the life and death struggle for existence. Now the elements and combination oldest in the muscle history of the race are represented earliest in the individual and those later follow in order²⁹.

The recapitulation theory was later restated by Appleton³⁰. In a comparison of the play life of adult savages with the play of children in civilized communities, she follows the "culture-epoch" theory fairly closely except that she recognizes that the intellectual aspects of play transform with changes in each cultural period. Appleton states that the child, being built upon the same general lines as were his ancestors, must of necessity use the same muscles and organs in a parallel manner, and in so doing recapitulates his instinctive phylogenetic inheritance³¹. The child possesses an instinctive impulse to act but his sensitivity to stimulation must be activated by his environment.

A number of other explanations are variously rooted in instinct, impulse, capacity and natural characteristics of the human organism. Gutsmuth considered the natural impulse to activity as the creator

²⁹G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence; Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education (New York: D. Appleton, 1904), p. 202.

³⁰L. Estelle Appleton, A Comparative Study of the Play Activities of Adult Savages and Civilized Children; An Investigation of the Scientific Basis of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910).

³¹Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer, Leisure and Recreation (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1958), 3rd. Edition, pp. 233, 234.

of play and the pleasure of activity as the first object of play³².

Dewey agrees in stating that all organic beings are naturally active:

The fact of the case is that from intra-organic stimuli, the organism is in a constant state of action, activity indeed being the very essence of life. When the myth of natural quiescence is surrendered with its accompanying myth of the need of a special premium in order to arouse an inert agent, it ceases to be necessary to search for any special object in order to account for play. The only thing necessary is to state the conditions under which organic activity takes this or that form³³.

Dewey's conclusion is echoed in the "tendency to be active" and "tendency to play" ideas of Bowen and Mitchell³⁴ and McDougall³⁵, respectively. "Play must be reckoned among the native tendencies of the mind of high social value"³⁶. According to Ghosh play constitutes the "...spontaneous expression of what is within"³⁷.

Ghosh's account recalls Froebel's declaration that:

...the spontaneous play of the child discloses the future inner life of the man.

The plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later

³² J.F. GutsMuth, Spiele zur Uebung und Erholung des Körpers und Geistes, 1796, in George E. Johnston, Education by Plays and Games (New York: Ginn and Co., 1907), p. 34. It should be noted that the "pleasure of activity" must be considered a purposive explanation.

³³ John Dewey, in Paul Monroe (Ed.), A Cyclopedia of Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925), Vol. III-IV, p. 725.

³⁴ Wilbur P. Bowen and Elmer D. Mitchell, The Theory of Organized Play (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1930), ch. IX.

³⁵ Wm. McDougall, An Introduction to Social Psychology (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1919), pp. 107-116.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

³⁷ S. Ghosh, in Stuart H. Britt and Sidney Q. Janus, "Towards a Social Psychology of Human Play", The Journal of Social Psychology, 13(1941), p. 356.

life; for the whole man is developed and shown in these, in his tenderest dispositions, in his innermost tendencies³⁸.

Buytendijk attempted to solve the structural problem presented by play with his theory which has been labelled "infantile dynamics"³⁹. The essence of the theory is the assertion that the child plays because he is a child, that is, because the essential characteristics of his "dynamics" prevent him from doing anything else but play. Buytendijk ascribes to the nature of the "dynamics" four main characteristics which are capable of explaining play: sensory-motor or mental lack of coherence, impulsiveness, a "pathic" attitude as opposed to a "gnostic" attitude (that is, a need for sympathetic understanding rather than for objective knowledge), and a certain "shyness with respect to things" which keeps the child from using them, leaving him vacillating between attraction and withdrawal⁴⁰.

Sully also concludes that play essentially derives from the child's mental structure. He conceives of play as the spontaneous activity of the child wherein there is expression of childish imagination and ideas⁴¹. Piaget's theory of assimilation, which

³⁸Friedrich Froebel, The Education of Man (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887), p. 55.

³⁹Britt and Janus, op. cit., p. 355.

⁴⁰Piaget, op. cit. pp. 159-161.

⁴¹J. Sully, Studies of Childhood (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1903), p. 27-36.

was presented in detail in section two of this paper, finds its roots in the mental structure of the child and is another play theory which is phrased as a causal explanation⁴². In brief, Piaget conceives play as a mere expansion of tendencies which freely assimilates things to one another and everything to the ego.

The purposive concept of functional pleasure which Piaget employs to establish the origin of play in his theory is akin to the causal explanations of Shand's and Slotkin's theories of play. Shand views play as the characteristic behavior of "the emotional system of Joy"⁴³. He formulates a law for play behavior which indicates autotelic activity. In discussing the "esthetics" of play, Slotkin proposes that play is performed for its own sake, rather than as a means to reaching some "goal" in the ordinary sense of the word; that is, the behavior itself is the goal⁴⁴. Both Groos and Piaget give mention to what J.M. Baldwin has described as circular reaction, that is, the tendency of reactions to renew the stimuli, and in so doing the writers express the

⁴²Piaget, op. cit., pp. 87-168.

⁴³Alexander Shand, in Mary Jane Reaney, "The Psychology of Organized Group Games", British Journal of Psychology: Monograph Supplement, vol. IV (1916), p. 13.

⁴⁴J. S. Slotkin, Social Anthropology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), pp. 270, 271.

significance of the involuntary tendency towards repetition⁴⁵.

Groos indicates that the nature of the organism is such that this repetition leads often to a trance-like condition of complete intoxication in the activity⁴⁶.

III. PURPOSIVE EXPLANATIONS OF PLAY

The category embodying the purposive explanations of play is based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the coping component of behavior and the purposive nature of purposive (functional and motivational) explanations. The theories which are contained in this section are viewed as purposive explanations of human play.

The theory of surplus energy is usually labelled as the Schiller-Spencer theory. Schiller originally proposed the concepts which later writers imputed as a theory in 1794 in Letter 27 of The Aesthetic Education of Man. The statement was subsequently restated by a number of other theorists who added new dimensions to the original statement. The essence of Schiller's account is contained in the following quotation:

Not content with what simply satisfies Nature and meets his need, he demands superfluity; to begin with, certainly, merely a superfluity of material, in order to conceal from his desires

⁴⁵Groos, op. cit., p. 366; and Piaget, op. cit., pp. 147, 153.

⁴⁶Groos, ibid., pp. 367-369.

their boundaries, in order to assure his enjoyment beyond the existing need, but soon a superfluity in the material, an aesthetic supplement, in order to extend his enjoyment beyond every need...

Certainly Nature has given even to the creatures without reason more than the bare necessities of life, and cast a gleam of freedom over the darkness of animal existence. When the lion is not gnawed by hunger and no beast of prey is challenging him to battle, his idle energy creates for itself an object; he fills the echoing desert with his high-spirited roaring, and his exuberant power enjoys itself in purposeless display...

The animal works when deprivation is the mainspring of its activity, and it plays when the fulness of its strength is this mainspring, when superabundant life is its own stimulus to activity⁴⁷.

Schiller develops his account further to the point at which the play impulse, acting in a climate free from care, culminates in the evolution of the aesthetic sentiments.

Spencer elaborates Schiller's view and develops a more comprehensive theory. In furthering Schiller's work, Spencer connects the idea of imitation with that of overflow of energy and indicates that the play of children tends to take the form of imitation and repetition of those efforts which are necessary for the maintenance of life. In reviewing Spencer's basic account of the surplus energy theory the similarities with Schiller's statements may be noted. Spencer states that:

...Inferior kinds of animals have in common the trait, that all their forces are expended in fulfilling functions essential to

⁴⁷ Johann C. Friedrich von Schiller, Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man (New York: F. Ungar, 1965), pp. 132, 133.

the maintenance of life. They are unceasingly occupied in searching for food, in escaping from enemies, in forming places of shelter, and in making preparations for progeny. But as we ascend to animals of high types, having faculties more efficient and more numerous, we begin to find that time and strength are not wholly absorbed in providing for immediate needs. Better nutrition, gained by superiority, occasionally yields a surplus of vigor...

Thus it happens that in the more-evolved creatures, there often recurs an energy somewhat in excess of immediate needs, and there comes also such rest, now of this faculty and now of that, as permits the bringing of it up to a state of high efficiency by the repair which follows waste...

Every one of the mental powers, then, being subject to this law, that its organ when dormant for an interval longer than ordinary becomes unusually ready to act--unusually ready to have its correlative feelings aroused, giving an unusual readiness to enter upon all the correlative activities; it happens that a stimulation of those activities is easily fallen into, when circumstances offer it in place of the real activities. Hence play of all kinds--hence this tendency to superfluous and useless exercise of faculties that have been quiescent.

This useless activity of unused organs, which in these cases hardly rises to what we call play, passes into play ordinarily so called where there is a more manifest union of feeling with the action. Play is equally an artificial exercise of powers which, in default of their natural exercise, become so ready to discharge that they relieve themselves by simulated actions in place of real actions⁴⁸.

In addition to the surplus energy theory, Spencer directed attention towards plays which gratified specific instincts, in particular, the predatory instinct⁴⁹.

Colozza views play as the superfluity of energy over and

⁴⁸ Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Psychology (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1910), vol. II, pp. 628-631.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 631.

above the essential needs of life⁵⁰. He states that in the little child the need to play increases in proportion as it plays; the more it plays the more it wishes to play. In order to play, psychic energy must also be present to augment the accumulated energy. Alexander⁵¹ advances a theory based upon "...the exercise of surplus libidinal energy not required for the grim task of survival"⁵². He views life as a dynamic equilibrium which is governed by three dynamic processes: the principle of stability, the principle of economy, and the principle of surplus energy wherein play and all other erotic phenomena arise.

Giddens, in discussing Huizinga's work, maintains that Huizinga's "play impulse" appears to represent a reappearance of the surplus energy concept⁵³. Another example of the influence of this concept on modern-day theories may be found in the work of Tolman who indicates that "men and perhaps some of the lower animals have a need under certain conditions to achieve 'mild harmonious fatigues' "⁵⁴.

⁵⁰G.A. Colozza, in Reaney, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵¹Franz Alexander, "A Contribution to the Theory of Play", Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 27 (1958), pp. 175-193.

⁵²Ibid., p. 178.

⁵³Giddens, op. cit., p. 80.

⁵⁴E.C. Tolman, Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men, in Frank A. Beach, "Current Concepts of Play in Animals", The American Naturalist, vol. 79 (1945), p. 527.

Writers who viewed the surplus energy theory as an inadequate or incomplete statement of the "why's" and "wherefore's" of play developed complementary theories, termed the recreation theory and the relaxation theory.

Lazarus was the chief exponent of the recreation theory or as it has otherwise been labelled, the recuperation theory. Play restores and revitalizes the mentally and physically tired and as Lazarus states:

After work we require rest which accomplishes recuperation. But hardly ever does mere empty, inactive rest suffice for recuperation....flee from empty idleness to active recreation in play⁵⁵.

Lord Kames expressed the same idea previous to Lazarus when he said: "...play is necessary for man in order to refresh himself after labor"⁵⁶.

The relaxation theory finds its most complete statement in the writings of Patrick, who stated that play, in particular adult play, is the result of a demand by the higher cerebral cortex for relaxation.

...there are some brain centers, or some brain tracts, or some forms of cerebral functioning, that are put under severe strain in our modern strenuous life and there must be some kind of activity which will relieve these centers, or these tracts, during a considerable portion of each waking day and involve other centers not so subject to exhaustion. Such activity we

⁵⁵Moritz Lazarus, in Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit., p. 81.

⁵⁶Kames, in Sapora and Mitchell, ibid., p. 81.

call play or sport. Perhaps the word "relaxation" would be a more exact description of it⁵⁷.

Patrick also states that the purpose of play is to provide a change from work. In the child:

...the higher brain tracts, those making work possible, are not developed. If a child does anything, he must play, i.e., his activity must take the form prescribed by the brain patterns already developed, and these are the old racial ones⁵⁸.

Shivers presents a modern interpretation of the relaxation theory in his consideration of homeostasis as a motive for recreation⁵⁹. Coverage is given both physiological homeostasis and its counterpart, psychological homeostasis (complacency).

Shivers asserts that:

If homeostasis is the condition that motivates behavior in human beings, it must also serve as the motivational stimulus for

⁵⁷G.T.W. Patrick, The Psychology of Relaxation (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1916), p. 49.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁹Shivers, op. cit., pp. 58-62. Homeostasis is the process by which the body continues to produce the chemical balance necessary to maintain life. Shivers quotes Rignano's statement of the principle of homeostasis:

Every organism is a physiological system in a stationary condition and tends to preserve this condition or to restore it as soon as it is disturbed by any variation occurring within or outside the organism. This property constitutes the foundation and essence of all "need", of all "desires", of all the most important appetites. All movements of approach or withdrawal, of attack or flight, of seizing or rejecting which animals make are only so many direct or indirect consequences of this very general tendency of every stationary physiological condition to remain constant...., in E. Rignano, The Psychology of Reasoning (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923), p. 6.

recreation. Just as there are physiochemical needs for equilibrium in the organism, there is also psychological need for equilibrium which reveals itself as the environmental changes during the daily experience of living. When the individual consciously or unconsciously realizes imbalance in his life he tends to move toward a rebalance in which harmony and accord between the self and environment are found. This balance may be restored through recreation.

The distinguishing feature of recreation is the consummatory quality which sets up or regains for the individual the equilibrium lost during impact with environmental forces. The consummatory act is characterized by complete absorption. During such intense concentration consummation displaces any maladjustment so that harmony is restored or re-created in the individual. The whole concept of the consummatory act depends upon and helps to explain the principle of homeostasis. In recreation, a need is met and satisfied. The satisfaction continues until some other disturbance enters the psychosomatic field, at which time equilibrium is lost and the process repeats itself. Thus the process is dynamic and perpetual⁶⁰.

The concept of homeostasis is further refined by adding the concept of the phenomenal self⁶¹. This concept maintains that the preservation of the individual's self (the "I") makes logical and consistent all human behavior. "From birth to death the defense of the phenomenal self is the most pressing, most crucial, if not the only task of existence"⁶². The basic human need may be defined as the preservation and enhancement of the phenomenal self. Behavior, including recreation, is therefore viewed as being produced by the organism's need to maintain a constant.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 60, 61.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 61, 62. The phenomenal self includes all those parts of the phenomenal field which the individual experiences as part or characteristic of himself. Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs, Individual Behavior (New York: Harper and Row, 1949), p. 54.

⁶²Ibid.

Gardner Murphy also employs the principle of homeostasis in developing his biosocial approach to motivation⁶³. Murphy hypothesizes "...that all activity is traceable to tension, that tension is 'need' for acting, and that tension, need and motive are one and the same"⁶⁴. The plays of children are viewed as part of the over-all activity drives that are spurred by the dynamic and ever-changing tension level. A related explanation appears in the work of Haun⁶⁵. He indicates that our central nervous system is critically dependent upon sensory input which may be classified as either "ego-syntonic" or "ego-dystonic".* Play (recreation) is always "ego-syntonic" and is therefore sought after to maintain a state of equilibrium in the psychic tension (balance of ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic input) of the organism, which is normally disrupted by work which Haun views as dystonic because it is not voluntary and not always pleasurable.

The "needs" theory proposed by Murray⁶⁶ and the "tension reduction" theory put forward by Sullivan⁶⁷ are also related to

⁶³Gardner Murphy, Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure (New York: Harper and Bros., 1947).

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 89.

⁶⁵Paul Haun, Recreation: A Medical Viewpoint (New York: Columbia University Bureau of Publications, 1965), pp. 43-48.

*Ego-Syntonic--that which is acceptable to our conscious self.
Ego-Dystonic--that which is repugnant to our conscious self.

⁶⁶Henry Murray, in Ledford J. Bischof, Interpreting Personality Theories (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 167, 168.

⁶⁷Harry S. Sullivan, in Ledford J. Bischof, Interpreting Personality Theories (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 167, 168.

the foregoing relaxation-recreation theories of play. Play to Murray is a natural state of existence for man. Man plays because he needs it; that is, there is a direct need within the self to play (seek enjoyable relaxation of stress, act for "fun" without purpose)⁶⁸. According to Sullivan man plays "...to ease tension, to emulate personifications either actively or symbolically, and primarily to be an active part of a social situation"⁶⁹.

A number of purposive explanations have been proposed which are based on certain conditions of specific instincts. Lee centers his play explanation upon the fulfillment of a play instinct. The function of play in growth is to realize the potential body, and to supplement the impulses which the major instincts give in general terms by habits and reflexes, making them efficient to specific ends of producing results or objects⁷⁰. In addition to an over-all play instinct Lee posits a host of other instincts, among them seven principal play instincts: creation, rhythm, hunting, fighting, nurture, curiosity, and team play or belonging.

Gulick's theory of play is also rooted in the operation of specific basic instincts and in the significance of play behaviors in children's growth. Gulick criticizes the recapitulation theory,

⁶⁸Murray, op. cit.

⁶⁹Sullivan, op. cit., p. 298.

⁷⁰Joseph Lee, Play in Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 25, 247.

while employing the theory in composing his own. For example, one of his conclusions concerning the nature of play is the following:

Certain great desires engulf the individual, directing his will, his purposes, to their own decided ends, with but slight regard for the benefit of the individual himself....Each of these great waves or tides of desire raises the level of the psychic range and power of the individual, and makes the next one possible....In this sense each individual recapitulates the history of his kind, both in individual growth and in social relations⁷¹.

"The impulse to play in special ways is certainly instinctive"⁷².

William James stated the foregoing in discussing the nature of play.

He also asserted that:

...all simple active games are attempts to gain the excitement yielded by certain primitive instincts, through feigning that the occasions for their exercise are these. They involve imitation, hunting, fighting, rivalry, acquisitiveness, and construction combined in various ways; their special rules are habits, discovered by accident, selected by intelligence, and propagated by tradition;...⁷³

Other theorists; Keri⁷⁴, Spencer⁷⁵, and Walder⁷⁶, base their play theories or a phase of their theories on actions of individual specific

⁷¹Luther H. Gulick, A Philosophy of Play (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. xvi.

⁷²William James, The Principles of Psychology (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1907), vol. II, p. 427.

⁷³Ibid., p. 427.

⁷⁴Hedvig Keri, "Ancient Games and Popular Games", American Imago, vol. 15 (1958).

⁷⁵Spencer, op. cit.

⁷⁶Robert Walder, "The Psychoanalytic Theory of Play", The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 2 (1933).

instincts. Keri analyzes common children's games of one basic type and indicates the penetration of the instinctive syndrome of clinging; Spencer discusses the predatory instinct; and Walder indicates the influence of the instinct of mastery.

McDougall considered play the result of the ripening of the instinct of rivalry. His point of view may be summarized in the following statement:

If we ask--In what does this special adaptation(play) consist? The answer is--it consists in the tendency for the various instincts (on the skilled exercise of which adult efficiency depends) to ripen and to come into action in each individual of the species before they are needed for serious use...

Play, then, is determined by the premature ripening of instincts. The ripening of any instinct in individuals of any species is liable to be shifted forwards or backwards in the age-scale during the course of racial evolution, so that the order of their ripening and of their appearances in the individual does not conform to the law of recapitulation⁷⁷.

Present in the literature is a multiplicity of accounts which discuss one or more motives, or purposes, or functions that play serves. These various statements are, as a rule, highly specific and are developed in response to a particular situation. In order to avoid needless repetition and loss of continuity the single-concept theories will be grouped or summarized wherever convenient.

The concept of mastery is frequently discussed in the psycho-analytic theories of play. Basically, the writers deal with either

⁷⁷William McDougall, Social Psychology (Boston: John W. Luce and Co., 1918), p. 113.

mastery of reality and related aspects or mastery of trauma and related aspects. Mastery of reality and mastery of trauma both involve the process which has been labelled "repetition compulsion" and an understanding of the process is necessary for consideration of the idea of mastery.

By this repetition compulsion proper we understand the process described as follows: The individual has been through a specific experience, which was too difficult or too large for him to assimilate immediately. This unabsorbed, or incompletely absorbed experience weighs heavily upon his psychic organization and calls for a new effort at handling and for a reexperience⁷⁸.

The process of repetition compulsion is seen as the key process in mastery of reality or trauma. Freud, the originator of the term, repetition compulsion, concludes that:

In the play of children we seem to arrive at the conclusion that the child repeats even the unpleasant experiences because through his own activity he gains a far more thorough mastery of the strong impression than was possible by mere passive experience. Every fresh repetition seems to strengthen this mastery for which the child strives.⁷⁹

Walder⁸⁰, Kris⁸¹, and Erikson⁸² are the leading exponents of this mastery of reality and environment. The writers who view the function

⁷⁸Walder, op. cit., pp. 213, 214.

⁷⁹Sigmund Freud, in Walder, ibid., p. 215.

⁸⁰Walder, ibid.

⁸¹Ernst Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1952).

⁸²Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1950).

of play as mastery of trauma are the aforementioned writers and Freud⁸³, Adatto⁸⁴, Phillips⁸⁵, and Peller⁸⁶.

The processes of ego function and assimilation are closely allied with the process of mastery and appear to represent aspects of the same process. Erikson states that:

I would look at a play act as,...a function of the ego, an attempt to bring into synchronization the bodily and the social processes of which one is a part even while one is a self⁸⁷.

...the child's play is the infantile form of the human ability to deal with experience by creating model situations and to master reality by experiment and planning⁸⁸.

Erikson, in paraphrasing Freud, describes play as "...the royal road to the understanding of the infantile ego's efforts at synthesis"⁸⁹.

The basic similarity among the three processes; mastery, ego function, and assimilation, may be viewed in the following statement by Walder.

⁸³Sigmund Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (London: The Hogarth Press, 1920).

⁸⁴Carl Adatto, "On Play and the Psychopathology of Golf", American Psychoanalytic Association Journal, vol. 12 (1964), pp. 826-841.

⁸⁵Richard H. Phillips, "The Nature and Function of Children's Formal Games", The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, vol. 29 (1960), pp. 200-207.

⁸⁶Lili E. Peller, "Libidinal Phases, Ego Development, and Play", The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, vol. 9 (1954), pp. 178-198.

⁸⁷Erikson, op. cit., p. 184.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 195.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 182.

According to the conclusions arrived at by psychoanalysis, play may be a process like a repetition compulsion, by which excessive experiences are divided into small quantities, reattempted and assimilated in play⁹⁰.

There are a minimum of twenty related single-concept theories which appear in the psychoanalytic writings. Many are variations on the themes of assimilation, ego function and mastery which form the bases of a psychoanalytic theory of play. Walder provides a summary statement of the psychoanalytic contributions to play investigation when he proffers the following abridged phrases:

...instinct of mastery; wish fulfilment; assimilation of overpowering experiences according to the mechanism of the repetition compulsion; transformation from passivity to activity; leave of absence from reality and from the super-ego; fantasies about real objects⁹¹.

Psychologists have also proposed an array of single-concept theories. Slavson provides an excellent summary of the contributions which psychologists have expressed.

Thus recreation can serve a number of purposes to suit one's mood, to utilize available excess energy, or to drain off emotional pressure. Some of the services of recreation to the individual may be classified as those that serve as complementary experiences, as having compensatory values, as serving to discharge aggression, as patterns for regression, as escape from reality, as satisfying social hunger, and as resources for solitude⁹².

To date, in the presentation of the purposive-coping explanations of

⁹⁰Walder, op. cit., p. 217.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 224.

⁹²Samuel R. Slavson, Recreation and the Total Personality (New York: Association Press, 1946), p. 10.

human play, coverage has not been given to the major explanations which have dealt with catharsis, compensation and socialization.

Catharsis, as viewed by Groos, represents a safety-valve mechanism for the expression of pent-up emotion⁹³. This theory was originally stated by Aristotle but he confined his doctrine of "Catharsis of the Passions" to dramatic tragedy, maintaining that through tragedy the soul is freed from something that is injurious⁹⁴. The catharsis explanation is clearly expressed in the following statement by Carr.

Catharsis...implies the idea of purging or draining of that energy which has anti-social possibilities, and hence the cathartic value may be predicted of only certain play reactions. The value of football, boxing, and other physical contests in relieving the pugnacious tendencies of boys is readily apparent as examples. Without the numberless well organized set forms of play possessed by society which give a harmless outlet to the mischievous and unapplied energy of the young, the task of the teacher and parent would be appalling⁹⁵.

Pickford⁹⁶, Brill⁹⁷, and Gillin⁹⁸ have all employed the cathartic

⁹³ Groos, in Reaney, op. cit., p. 10.

⁹⁴ Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit., p. 88.

⁹⁵ Harvey A. Carr, "The Survival Values of Play", Investigations of the Department of Psychology and Education of the University of Colorado, vol. 1 (1902), p. 18.

⁹⁶ R.W. Pickford, "Aspects of the Psychology of Games and Sports", British Journal of Psychology, vol. 31 (1941), pp. 279-293.

⁹⁷ A.A. Brill, "The Why of the Fan", North American Review, vol. 228 (1929), pp. 427-434.

⁹⁸ J.L. Gillin, "The Sociology of Recreation", American Journal of Sociology, vol. 19 (1913-14), pp. 825-834.

effect in their explanations, which deal with aggression sublimation, the aggressive component of the mastery impulse, and the emotional spree purpose of play, respectively.

Spencer's statement; "This love of conquest, so dominant in all creatures because it is so correlative of success in the struggle for existence, gets gratification from a victory at chess in the absence of ruder victories,"⁹⁹ anticipates the principle of compensatory satisfaction which receives its clearest presentation in the writings of Robinson¹⁰⁰. Robinson regarded play as essentially a "...compensatory mechanism having the same origin and impetus as the day dream of phantasy"¹⁰¹. The inherited and acquired impulses for which the child can find no direct outlet:

...create a situation demanding compensation, and this compensation is as a rule secured through make-believe activities. Most common among such activities are play and phantasy¹⁰².

Two main determinants of play are posited by Robinson: the child's natural tendency toward free expression, and the child's need for a certain credibility in experience¹⁰³. Claparède develops the

⁹⁹ Spencer, op. cit., p. 631.

¹⁰⁰ Edward S. Robinson, "The Compensatory Function of Make-Believe Play", Psychological Review, vol. 27 (1920), pp. 429-439.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 429.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 435.

expression concept into what has been termed the ego-expansion theory, which is in turn superseded by the more systematized self-expression theory¹⁰⁴. Claparède expresses the theory thusly:

The function of play is to allow the child to express his ego, to display his personality, to pursue momentarily the line of his greatest interest in cases where he cannot do so through serious activities¹⁰⁵.

One of the most systematic statements of a theory of play is the self-expression theory outlined by Mitchell and Mason¹⁰⁶.

The writers:

...view man as an active, dynamic creature, predisposed by his psychological and physiological characteristics, anatomical structure and level of physical fitness, to seek out certain types of recreational activities which are uniquely suited to his interests and abilities. Within this framework, each individual seeks self-expression through play and satisfies universally felt needs for new experience, for security, for accomplishment, for response from and recognition by others, for participation, and for aesthetic involvement and stimulation¹⁰⁷.

These writers, like others holding similar views, recognize the existence of those needs or drives in men which have been labelled as "self-fulfilling" or "self-actualizing" drives¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁴E. Claparède, Psychology of the Infant, in Piaget, op. cit.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 158-159.

¹⁰⁶Sapora and Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 89-103.

¹⁰⁷Richard G. Kraus, Recreation and the Schools (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964), p. 11.

¹⁰⁸Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper and Bros., 1954), p. 183. Self-actualization is defined as intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what is the organism itself.

Appleton maintains that play is that aspect of growth which involves the developmental exercise of maturing functions¹⁰⁹. Growth, or the hunger for it, is advanced as the basic drive to play behavior. Play thus precedes the ability to function and sustains the development of the particular function until full development at which time the play impulses in reference to that function subside¹¹⁰. Groos, in choosing the term, "preparatory" as the essence of his theory, suggests a purposive-coping explanation. However, as was indicated in the section on causal explanation, his theory is sufficiently comprehensive to combine both forms of explanation. His statements:

[Play]...is, in short, preparatory to the tasks of life¹¹¹.

Play is the agency employed to develop crude powers and prepare them for life's uses,...¹¹²

and his elaboration of adaptive aspects of his theory clearly indicate the presence of purposive-coping explanation. Meister describes childhood in terms of pure function play and pure illusion play which comprise a preparation for later life¹¹³. Lowenfeld regards play as an essential function of the passage of the child from immaturity to

¹⁰⁹Appleton, op. cit.

¹¹⁰Lehman and Witty, op. cit., p. 21.

¹¹¹Groos, op. cit., p. 361.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 375.

¹¹³R. Meister, in Britt and Janus, op. cit., p. 355.

emotional maturity¹¹⁴.

Various theorists have discussed the role of play in the socialization of the child. Play has an essential role in the educative process¹¹⁵, and in the wider process of socialization. Mead¹¹⁶ and Moreno¹¹⁷ both discuss the function of play in the development of roles. Mead gives play a primary role in the development of the self. Play, and especially games, involves taking the roles of all the others involved in the group. Through acting out the roles of others in play the child develops a "generalized other" which is characterized as the attitude of the whole community. Thus the full development of the self can occur and character in the moral sense may develop¹¹⁸. The influence of the development of rules on personality development is well documented in the writings of Piaget¹¹⁹. An evolution towards character morality, similar to Mead's statement, can be traced in the progress from the practice

¹¹⁴Margaret Lowenfeld, Play in Childhood (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935).

¹¹⁵N.V. Scarfe, "Play is Education", Childhood Education, vol. 39 (1962), pp. 117-121.

¹¹⁶George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934).

¹¹⁷Jacob Moreno, in Ledford J. Bischof, Interpreting Personality Theories (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 405-407.

¹¹⁸Mead, op. cit., pp. 149-164.

¹¹⁹Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948).

stage, through the symbolic stage and finally to the rules stage of play^{*}.

A final grouping of purposive-coping explanations of human play revolves around the concepts of hedonism and functional pleasure. Freud, in his early writings, was committed to the pleasure principle¹²⁰. According to this principle the infant begins life with an intense desire for pleasure and all of his activities are carried on with the intent of deriving pleasure from them. Freud posits the economic motive, the consideration of the yield of pleasure involved, as one of the primary motives for play¹²¹. The pleasure principle is a prime motive that strongly influences the pursuit of activity and for that reason most writers incorporate terms such as joy, pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment, and happiness in their discussions.

Charlotte Buhler¹²² views play as a pursuit of functional

*Reference may be made to Chapter II of this study, wherein Piaget's theory of play and mental growth is discussed. Piaget found four successive stages in the application of rules to play and each stage marked a significant transition in the development of the child's moral judgment: motor level, egocentrism, cooperation and codification of the rules.

¹²⁰Freud, op. cit. Note that in this later book, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, he modified his basic concepts to refute the pleasure principle as the sole force for motivation.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 120.

¹²²Charlotte Buhler, The First Year of Life (New York: The John Day Co., 1930).

pleasure.

As function pleasure Karl Buhler has designated those pleasures which can accompany the organized course of a certain succession of movements, as well while they are being practiced as when they have been mastered¹²³.

Significant differences between the concepts of hedonism and functional pleasure may be noted. Adatto¹²⁴ and Kris¹²⁵ also accord function pleasure a consequential role in their comments on the nature of play. Piaget, on the other hand, indicates that function pleasure is a concomitant of the process of functional assimilation rather than a more central motive or drive which spurs on the activity of play¹²⁶.

IV. SUMMARY STATEMENT

The foregoing tentative classification scheme emphasizes certain points which have implications for further developments in the classification of the explanations of the nature of human play.

1. As stated previously, the categories within the classification scheme are not mutually exclusive; nor can they be because of the nature of play itself, and the nature of the theory concepts which

¹²³Ibid., p. 64.

¹²⁴Adatto, op. cit.

¹²⁵Kris, op. cit.

¹²⁶Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood, op. cit.

have been advanced to explain play.¹ This lack of discreteness in the phenomena may be prohibitive to the development of a systematic classification of the theories of play, and may preclude attempts to structure aetiology and teleology as distinct areas within the study of human play.

2. A variety of theories is present in the classification scheme and in the literature. Explanations classified vary in terms of being; relatively comprehensive or restrictive, relatively systematic or fragmented, empirically-based or highly speculative, and integrated or unrelated.

3. The theories of play, in most instances, are closely allied with and are developed from a consideration of the theories and philosophies which deal with larger areas of knowledge. For example, Bischof's book, Interpreting Personality Theories¹²⁷ presents an analysis of a particular personality theory and then proceeds to illustrate how the particular theory would explain selected phenomena, including play and recreation. New play theories will evolve with the development of new theories dealing with larger areas of knowledge.

4. A relative preponderance of purposive-coping explanations may be noted in the classification scheme and in the play literature. This is viewed as reflecting the basic trend in the various disciplines. Maslow capsules this trend in psychology thusly:

¹²⁷Bischof, op. cit.

Because contemporary psychology is overly pragmatic, it abdicates from certain areas that should be of great concern to it. In its preoccupation with practical results, with technology, and means, it has notoriously little to say, for example, about beauty, art, fun, play, wonder, awe, joy, love, happiness, and other "useless" reactions¹²⁸.

A second reason for this imbalance may be gleaned from Piaget's comment that:

...there are many other interpretations of play, but it would be useless to discuss them in detail since they are rather functional descriptions than causal explanations. In this field, all the authors are right since, as we have constantly seen, play can serve all purposes¹²⁹.

The third, and most important reason is that play falls within the scope of the behavioral sciences and as such is subjected to the typical analysis which involves purposive explanation.

5. Related to the previous comment is the tentative conclusion which may be drawn from the existence of causal-expressive explanations in the body of play theory. On the basis of the rudimentary classification, Maslow's view is sustained and is of direct pertinence for advancements from this study.

Play may be either coping or expressive or both as is now quite clear from the literature on play therapy and play diagnosis. It seems quite probable that this general conclusion will supplant the various functional, purposive, motivational theories of play put forward in the past. Since there is nothing to prevent us from using the coping-expressive dichotomy with animals, we may also reasonably look forward to more useful and realistic inter-

¹²⁸ Maslow, op. cit., p. 179.

¹²⁹ Piaget, op. cit., p. 158.

pretations of human play as well. All we have to do to open up this new area for research is to admit the possibility that play may be useless and unmotivated, a phenomenon of being rather than of striving, end rather than means¹³⁰.

6. In spite of the limitations which are inherent in the explanations of play, the tentative classification is viewed as being on a sounder foundation than were its predecessors. To the writer the present classification scheme seems to be more complete and comprehensive than any previous scheme, as it is based upon criteria which do not eliminate the coverage of all the theories that have been advanced. The continuum which provides one of the bases of the classification scheme is viewed as having a close approximation to the reality factors in the nature of play itself. In addition, it provides a fairly exhaustive framework for ordering theories which have a behavioral component. Furthermore, it is seen as emphasizing the importance of understanding the link between explanation and the phenomena explained.

¹³⁰Maslow, op. cit., p. 302.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of the study were twofold: (1) to review the literature in the field of human play; and (2) to formulate a tentative classification of the theories of human play in order to move towards further conceptualization of the nature of human play.

The method of research was that of critical analysis based on a survey of the literature of the field of human play and relevant literature from related areas of study. The study was designed to promote a clearer concept of the word "play" and to integrate a pertinent selection of ideas to the end of establishing a rudimentary classification of the theories of human play which may hopefully serve as a spring to further conceptualization.

An overview of the writings indicates the need for more rigorous conceptualization in the field of human play. The desired cumulative characteristic of science is not demonstrated as most theories are derived from single fields of academic study or clinical practice with the result that the emerging body of knowledge tends to be a fragmented and unrelated collection of theories. Moreover, the theories advanced to date appear to be narrowly conceived, hypercritical of other theories, and too frequently lacking an empirical base. Such accounts must be superseded by accounts which stress a unified, interdisciplinary, and empirically-based point of view.

The scope, meaning and use of the concept, play, have changed considerably since its first appearance in the literature, and the current status of the conceptualization indicates a lack of consensus. The definition of play which was developed as one result of the review of literature is as follows: an activity or behavior is adjudged to be ludic in nature to the extent that it is characterized by an orientation towards a pole of behavior which is voluntary, consummatory, and governed by rules of irrelevance and a primacy of assimilation over accommodation.

Extant classification schemes employed either the orientation of a theory towards a particular academic discipline or the type of motivation present in the theory as the guideline or criterion for classification. The discipline-oriented classification, which comprise the majority of schemes, tended to be fragmented, irregular, repetitious and discipline-oriented, and gave the appearance of being a collection of theories rather than a classification of same. The second type of classification scheme was viewed as an improvement over the first, but it remained inadequate for two main reasons; it lacked completeness, and it was based upon the criterion of motivation which lacked the nature and scope to involve all the theories of play.

In an attempt to meet the need for development of a more suitable classification system, a tentative classification of the theories of human play was developed which was based upon the nature of the explanation, causal or purposive, present within the exposition

of the theories. The category embodying the causal explanations was based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the expressive component of behavior and the non-purposive nature of causal explanations. Purposive explanations comprised a category which was based upon the distinguishing characteristics of the coping component of behavior and the purposive nature of purposive explanations.

The tentative classification scheme emphasizes certain points which have implications for further development in the classification of explanations of the nature of human play. Briefly stated, these implications are the following:

1. The nature of play itself, and the nature of the theory concepts which have been advanced to explain play hampers the development of classification categories which are mutually exclusive.
2. The theories which are classified vary widely and may be classified on a continuum from being relatively comprehensive, empirically-based, systematic, and integrated to being restrictive, speculative, fragmented and unrelated.
3. The theories, in most instances, are closely allied with and are developed from a consideration of the theories and philosophies which deal with larger areas of knowledge.
4. A relative preponderance of purposive-coping explanations may be noted in the body of play theory.
5. A tentative conclusion which may be drawn from the formulation

of the tentative classification scheme is that play may be either coping or expressive behavior or both.

6. When compared with its predecessors, the tentative classification is viewed by the writer as being on a sounder foundation, as being more complete and comprehensive, and as featuring a more integrative and interdisciplinary treatment (which more closely approximates the reality factors present in the nature of play), and as emphasizing the importance of understanding the link between explanation and the phenomena explained.

In sum, the purposes of the study have been achieved, but considerable development and refinement of the contents of the study must be made in order to attain more rigorous conceptualization.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Students considering further study in this field should arm themselves with detailed preparation in pertinent areas of study such as semantics, logic and other facets of the philosophy of science; theory building in the social sciences; and major systems of psychological and philosophical theory; in order to pursue the following recommendations for further study.

1. That further conceptualization of the field of play take place with a view to establishing a comprehensive, empirically-based theory of the nature of human play.
2. That further conceptualization of the tentative classification of the theories of play take place in order to investigate the possibility

of establishing sub-categories and more refined criteria.

3. That the tentative conclusion, that play may be either coping behavior or expressive behavior or both, be subjected to more investigation.

4. That further conceptualization of terms related to play (games, sport, contests, amusements, rituals, athletics, physical education, recreation, leisure, work, drudgery, and discretionary or spare time) take place in order to facilitate the development of an integrated body of knowledge capable of assimilating cumulative ideas.

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